

AN  
ANSWER

TO THE

Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr. *SIMON BROWNE*'s

LETTER

TO

*Mr. Thomas Reynolds,*

CONTAINING

- I. The State of the Case between Mr. Browne and the Author.
- II. An Account of that which was the Occasion of a Conference with Mr. James Keach.
- III. A faithful Relation of what occurred from that Time, to his Dismission.
- IV. An Answer to various Reports and Objections.
- V. A Narrative of what passed in Relation to the Reverend Mr. John Evans, and his People.

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By *THOMAS REYNOLDS.*

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*Jer. xx. 10. Report, say they, and we will report it, &c.*

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L O N D O N:

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## ERRATA.

**P**Age 21. line 10. after *of* add *the former of*. p. 40. l. 12.  
for *were* r. *was*. p. 42. l. 21. dele *as long as he could*.  
p. 45. l. 4. dele *their* and after *to* r. *the Gentlemen's*. p. 65. l. 20.  
for *subscribing*. r. *non-subscribing*.





A N  
A N S W E R  
T O T H E  
Reverend Mr. *SIMON BROWNE's*  
L E T T E R, &c.



S E C T I O N I.

*Shewing the State of the Case, between  
Mr. Browne, and Me, and the Rea-  
sons of this Publication.*



*R. Browne* in his printed LETTER directed to me, has (in my Apprehension) treated me with *uncommon* Severity, and upon so *slight* an Occasion, that he appears to have wanted nothing more than an *Opportunity* for it.

Under Pretence of *expostulating* with me upon some few Heads of Argument I had modestly proposed, and some Matters of Fact I had reported in my *Dedication* of Mr. *Pomfret's* FUNERAL SERMON, and a *Passage* I had mentioned in the MEMOIRS of his LIFE, to wipe off an *Aspersion* cast on his *Memory*: He seems to make it his chief Aim to blemish my *Character*, and deprive me of one of the *greatest Blessings* in this World; I mean, that Share of Reputation and Interest I have had among good People, and which through the Grace of GOD I have been helped to maintain during my whole Life, and the Exercise of my Ministry, now above three and thirty Years in LONDON, the Place of my *Nativity*.

By this Means, I suppose, he hoped to bring *Discredit* on the Cause I thought it my *Duty* to say something in favour of. This is the *good Service*, which a younger Minister, lately come to Town, and who knows little or nothing of me by personal Conversation, has thought for his *Honour* to engage in. How well he hath acquitted himself, and how suitably to the Character of a *Minister of Christ*, they that have read his *Letter*, and shall *sedately* peruse what I here publish, will be in the best Capacity to judge.

Upon hearing that a *second Edition* was coming forth with a *Postscript*, I thought I had reason to expect, he would therein have expressed his hearty Concern for his *unseemly* Way of Writing, which has given Offence to  
Persons



Persons of all Persuasions, and not a few of his *own Friends*: And that he would at least have *softned*, if not retracted, his Account of *Facts*, in which he has been greatly mistaken. But instead hereof, he attempts (as well as the Case will bear) to evade the Charge of the *former*, and still persists, roundly to justify and farther to confirm the *latter*. Saying, "That he is conscious of no *wilful Falsification*, and has made it his *Endeavour* to be *well* and *truly* informed in *whatever* he has written on Report of others." Indeed after this he would not be *understood* to pronounce me an *ill Man* (I thank him for this *extraordinary* Instance of his Charity) yet how could he well be understood otherwise, after he had done his utmost to set me forth under that Character?

This being the present State of the Case, I have upon mature Deliberation thought it a Duty which I owed to my self and the Truth, to appear in my own Defence. Should I continue silent under these Circumstances, the World will be inclined to impute it to a consciousness of Guilt; my Adversaries will take Occasion to triumph, and infer the *Badness* of the *Cause* from the ill Character of the Men that maintain it; if Matters be let alone till I and those, who are able to attest the Truth of Facts, are gone off the Stage, the Cause of Truth will suffer, and a Brand of Infamy be fixed upon me. Besides, I have an only Son, whom I intend for the Ministry, (if God shall incline his Heart) and am very  
unwilling

unwilling he should suffer Prejudice, or be under any Discouragement as the *Descendant* of such a Father as I am represented : I have suffered long by false Reports, though whilst my Opposers did content themselves with more private Methods of Defamation, I only defended my self against them as they came in my way : But since Mr. *Browne* has thought fit to attack me in Print, and to *renew* the Assault *again* in his late *Postscript* ; I must stand condemned before the World, or be thought perfectly *stupid*, if I do not answer for my self in a Manner as publick as that in which I am accused.

My *chief Intention* in this Paper, is to set him right in Point of *FACTS*, and if I have made it sufficiently evident that he has been *wrong* ; I expect the Performance of his Promise, \* *to own his Mistakes, and make all the Reparation he can* for the great *Injury* he has done me.

I shall begin with that which occurs, *page 7<sup>th</sup>, Edit. 1.* which I take to be of *principal Moment*. After which I shall proceed to other Matters, which, so far as they concern me, are but Trifles in Comparison.

The Passage is this.

“ *Orthodoxy* I know will atone for many  
“ *Irregularities*, and, I fear, for some *Immo-*

---

\* See *Postscript* of his Letter, *Edit. 2.*

“ *ralities*

" *realities too.* A Zealot may lay Shares for  
 " a Brother in Conversation, undermine his  
 " Interest with his Hearers, and, till he has  
 " ripened his Design, profess great Respect  
 " and Esteem, and no Manner of Intention  
 " to do him Harm; and when he has artfully  
 " wrought up the People to his Purpose, get  
 " him ejected at once, and perhaps after all  
 " wipe his own Mouth and throw all the  
 " Blame on the People. If Zeal for the Faith  
 " will not cover a Multitude of such Sins,  
 " Multitudes of Zealots in all Ages have been  
 " very wrong in their Conduct, however right  
 " they have been in their Principles.

Every one that knows what was done in relation to Mr. *James Read*, my late *Assistant*, will believe Mr. *Browne* had *that* here in View, and that his Design is to charge all this Calumny upon me *by Insinuation*, though he does it not expressly and in direct Terms.

Among all his Slanders, there is none dressed up with more *Art*, or greater Aptness to impress the Minds of People to my Disadvantage than this. And who that shall believe it will not be under a strong Temptation to credit every Thing else he suggests to my Disreputation, and think me (what if guilty I should think my self) unworthy of the Ministry, or so much as common Respect, from any?

To pass by his *Sneer* at *Orthodoxy*, which (though Men of erroneous Principles may lay Claim to) a *grave Divine* would preserve the Reverence of, and not mention in such a ban-

tering Manner. By Zealot, every one will understand me to be the Person intended, on whom he endeavours to fix the worst of Characters, viz. *insidious, hypocritical, knavish*, and pretending Zeal for the Faith to cover a *Multitude of such Sins*.

And can Mr. Browne look back with Peace on such Insinuations? Can he notwithstanding all he declares in the Beginning of his *Post-script*, say, that he ever used the *proper Means* to be well and truly informed of those Things whereon his Suggestions are founded? Did he ever speak or write to me on this Head? Or hear what I, or the People I minister to, had to say for our Conduct in this Matter? If he cannot, I must tell him, that however the Thing should be, he hath sinned, *Prov. xviii. 13. He that answereth a Matter before he heareth it, it is Folly and Shame unto him*. It is much that noted Saying of a *Heathen* should slip him. *Qui statuit aliquid, parte inaudita altera, æquum licet statuerit, hæc æquus fuit. Sen.*

If he intended all this Reproach only as a *Bill in Chancery* to bring to *Confession* (tho' in that View, it would be too like the *Inquisition*, which is sometimes so much cried out upon, yet) my Innocence makes me both ready and willing to clear my self; and the wiping off such grievous Slanders, is of too great Importance to me to decline it. If in doing this I am obliged to disclose some Things that have been hitherto pretty much a Secret,



Secret, (and might have remained so for me) I am not to be blamed, but Mr. *Browne* and his *Advisers*, who have compelled me to it, and made it indispensibly necessary for vindicating the *Cause* in which I am concerned, as well as my own Reputation.

Before I proceed therefore to other Matters contained in his *Letter*, I shall first give a plain and genuine Account of the Affair between Mr. *Read* and me, from its *first Occasion* and *Rise*, to the *Conclusion* of it.

I look on this as my *chief Concern*, because it appears to be the principal Ground of all that Displeasure which the *Non-Subscribing Brethren* have expressed against me, and by the Reports about it, the greatest Mischief hath been done me. I find his *Dismission* to be the main Thing that is every where harped upon; many of my Friends both in *City* and *Countrey*, for want of understanding it aright, have hardly known what to say in my Defence, and would be farther puzzled from what Mr. *Browne*, a *Brother Minister*, hath publicly suggested against me. I hope these and the foregoing Considerations, will convince all my Friends, that I ought to set this Matter in its true Light.

The Account I shall now give, though somewhat long, will not be tedious to the unprejudiced, and those who have desired to be fully satisfied of the *Truth* of this whole Affair, which I have taken out of *faithful Me-*

*Memorandums* set down of Matters of Fact, as they daily occurred. It is as follows.

\*\*\*\*\*

## SECTION II.

*Containing an Account of that, which was the Occasion of a Conference between me and Mr. Read.*

**T**HU' after the unhappy Difference at *Salters-Hall*, not a few of my People were much dissatisfied with Mr. *Read*, for not subscribing the Doctrine of the ever blessed Trinity, as it has been generally received, and some had thereupon withdrawn from hearing him; yet I was so far from countenancing them herein, that I used my Endeavours to restore them to a good Opinion of him, and generally prevailed with them to give their Attendance on his Ministry, and continue their Encouragement to it. However I observed, there were several young Men in *Communion* with us, who absented themselves from my Ministry, while they constantly attended His. Whereupon meeting accidentally with one of them, who had for a considerable Time (even before the Difference at *Salters-Hall*) accustomed himself to this Practice; I took  
the

the Opportunity in a *mild* and *friendly* Manner to speak to him about it; signifying the Discouragement it gave me, and the bad Example it set to others, wishing I might know the Reasons of it. He kept himself on the Reserve, but afterwards sent me two *Letters*. The *first* I received the Day following, dated *March 23, 1719*. The other a *Fortnight* after. It would expose him too much, and do him more *Harm* than I wish him, to recite them at large. Besides, I am for shortening Matters as much as may be, and therefore shall only mention those Passages in them, which occasioned a *Conference* between Mr. *Read* and me, and laid the *Foundation* of that Difference, which afterward followed.

That which in his *first Letter* he gives as the Reason of his frequent Absence from the *Weigh-house*, was: " That since that wicked  
 " and scandalous Flame (as he calls it) broke  
 " out at *Salters-Hall*, my Mind appeared dis-  
 " composed and ruffled: That it was full of  
 " angry Resentments: That I interested my  
 " People in a Quarrel, for which this Genera-  
 " tion will be for ever *infamous*: That I did  
 " this sometimes in a Manner that was obvi-  
 " ous to every Body: At others, by *Innuen-*  
 " *does* and *Insinuations*: That I expressed my  
 " self in an unguarded Manner against Error  
 " and Heresy: That I was understood to mean  
 " the whole Body of *Non-Subscribers*, inclu-  
 " sive of Mr. *Read*: That this greatly preju-  
 " diced his Reputation and Usefulness, and  
 " alienated

“ alienated the Affection of some from him?  
 “ That for their refusing to subscribe, I cen-  
 “ sured them as *Arians*, or as departing from  
 “ the Truth.

“ As to his own Judgment in that great Ar-  
 “ ticle of the Christian Faith, the real proper  
 “ Divinity of *Christ*, and his Equality with  
 “ the Father, he firmly believed it; but was  
 “ far from thinking that the Disbelief of it is  
 “ damning, where Prayer and Inquiry after  
 “ Truth is not wanting. And in the Close of  
 “ his Letter, he wishes that an Affair *no way*  
 “ relating to the *Laity*, might for the future  
 “ no more come into the Pulpit.

In my Answer, *March 25, 1720*. I deny  
 his Charges, tell him they are such as he is  
 not able fairly to Support: That if after *ex-  
 press Exceptions*, and the *clearest Explica-  
 tions* any will pervert my Words, and under-  
 stand them in a Sense directly contrary to their  
 plain Meaning and my Intention; I know not  
 how it is possible for me to rectify such Peo-  
 ples Mistakes.

With respect to himself I observed, that tho’  
 he confessed the *Truth* of the Doctrine, he quit-  
 ted the *Importance* of it: That herein I differ’d  
 widely from him, and thought, that a Person,  
 who should pay religious Worship to Christ,  
 under the Notion of his not having real and  
 proper Divinity, was fallen into the heinous  
 Sin of *Idolatry*, was in a dangerous Error;  
 and whatever his Pretence might be to Prayer  
 and Inquiry after Truth (which I must leave



to GOD) yet notwithstanding, I must judge him unfit for Christian Communion: That this made me sorry to find the ill Turn, which had been given to his Mind by the *new Notions*, and that he was so far advanced to the Enemies Camp. I was likewise sorry he should think the Affair he wrote to me about, did *no way* relate to the *Laity*: If he understood the Controversy, he would be sensible it concerned them *greatly*, and that it was *their Cause* we were pleading, as well as the Cause of Truth: That one main part of the Struggle was for the *Liberty* and *Right*, which our People have by Scripture and the common Principles of Reason, to be satisfied of the *Sense*, in which their Ministers hold the Words of Scripture, touching Articles of Faith. And that all that we had done, was in order to prevent their being played upon by *crafty Seducers*, who otherwise might *privily creep in among them and deceive them*, of which we have had but too many sorrowful Instances of late.

In his *second Letter*, dated *April 8, 1725*. He charges me with " Self contradiction.  
 " That I tell him the Affair he wrote about  
 " greatly concerns the Laity, in Opposition to  
 " his Assertion, that it *no Way related to*  
 " *them*; and in another, I say it is *proper to*  
 " *be considered by us Ministers*.  
 " That what I observed, relating to the  
 " Distance of his Judgment from those, who  
 " apprehend the Disbelief of the real proper  
 " Divinity

“ Divinity of our Saviour, and his Equality  
 “ with the Father is damning, if attended  
 “ with Prayer and diligent Search after Truth,  
 “ is very far from the Argument. He says, I  
 “ take the *Affirmative*, and would be thought  
 “ to prove it *by begging the Question*, making  
 “ Suppositions in no respect relating to the  
 “ Premises, and from thence I draw Conclu-  
 “ sions vastly wide from the Thing he discre-  
 “ dits: That what he advanced, related not  
 “ to such a one’s *fitness for Christian Com-*  
 “ *munion*, nor did he say it was not a *danger-*  
 “ *ous Error*; but that he was not on Account  
 “ of this his Disbelief in a damnable State:  
 “ The which he says, he can no more recede  
 “ from, than he can from disbelieving, that a  
 “ Man designing for *Canterbury*, though he  
 “ should miss the nearest Way, should be be-  
 “ nighted, and thereby subjected to some In-  
 “ conveniences, may not however at last get  
 “ thither. This he is willing *any one should*  
 “ *know*. He adds, I confess the Doctrine,  
 “ *but do not think it of so great Importance,*  
 “ *having no Warrant from the Scripture.*

As to the Liberty and Right of the People,  
 to know the Sense of their Ministers touch-  
 ing Articles of Faith, he turns it off with a  
*Banter.*

All the other Parts of his long Letter, are  
 full of *gross Abuses* on my Person and Ministry.  
 If he sees fit, he has my Consent to publish  
 them, provided he does me the Justice to sub-  
 join my Replies.

To

To this *second Letter*, I sent a few Lines in Answer, *April 12, 1720.* and among other Things told him, that since he thought it *his Duty to leave my Ministry*, (as he acquainted me in his Letter I.) he did himself thereby direct me henceforward to look on him as one that had withdrawn himself from under my Care.

But seeing this Matter is now become *publick*, I think it proper to observe upon his Letter, that he is quite wrong in charging me with *Self-contradiction*. In one place of my Answer to him, I speak of *the Act of Ministers* subscribing; in another, of *the Right which People have* to know the Sense of their Ministers touching Articles of Faith. The first of these I tell him, *is proper to be considered by us Ministers*. The other a *Privilege and Right belonging to the People*. What Inconsistency is there between these two, or what Appearance of Self-contradiction?

As to what he says of my *begging the Question*, making Suppositions in no Respects relating to the Premises and drawing Conclusions vastly wide of the Thing he discredits. I answer. The Thing he discredits is, *That a Person, who pays religious Worship to Christ, tho' he denies him to be God, is guilty of a damning Sin*; that which I asserted in Opposition to this, was, *That he is in a dangerous Error, and has forfeited his Right to Christian Communion*. The Medium by  
C which

which I prove it, is, because he is guilty of the hainous Sin of *Idolatry*. If this be granted, the *Conclusions* I draw do naturally and necessarily flow from the *Premisses*; but this he calls a *begging of the Question* \*; and the Thing I find he would have me prove, is, that they who deny *Christ's Godhead* are (notwithstanding their *Inquiries* after Truth and Prayer to GOD) *guilty of a damning Sin*. To this I answer, as I did in my former Letter, that to determine how far this may affect a Man's State with Respect to another World, or how far Men may be sincere in their Prayers to GOD and *Inquiries* after Truth *belongs not to my Province*, I must leave this to GOD. It is enough for me to judge of the *Sin* and my own *Actions* with Reference to those that are fallen into it. And preserving to my self this Liberty, I cannot admit to Christian Communion those, who deny the GODHEAD of my Saviour, whatever their Pretences may be to Prayer or Sincerity. His *Similitude* has no Argument in it, and is easily turned upon him. A Man that is go-

---

\* That is, taking that for *granted*, which I ought to prove. Hereby it is plain, he is gone from the Doctrine of all the reformed Churches, who have all along charged the *Arians* and *Socinians* with *Idolatry* in worshipping Christ while they deny him to be truly and properly GOD, because herein they give that Glory to another which is due to GOD only. And if this be not *Idolatry*, we are at a Loss to this Day how to state the Notion of *Idolatry*. See Dr. Smalbrook's *Sermon*.



ing to *Canterbury* in the Night may be *smother'd* in a Slough, or if instead of going *East*, he shall happen to travel directly *West*, he will never get thither, whatever be the *Sincerity* of his Design.

But from hence, I take notice how far this Person is come already, *viz.* so far, as to assert,

*The Doctrine of the real GODHEAD of CHRIST is of no such Importance as it hath been generally reckoned.* This, he says, he is willing any one should know.

Again, it follows from his Way of reasoning, *That they who shall deny the GODHEAD of CHRIST need not be under any great Concern, if Prayer and Inquiry after Truth (as he expresses it) be not wanting.*

*That to charge those with Idolatry who worship Christ, tho' at the same Time they deny him to be GOD is begging the Question.*

And in the last Place *he banters the Right of the People to know the Sense of their Ministers touching Articles of Faith.*

I am sorry I have been so long with this Person, and yet in order to set Matters in their true Light, and to help the Reader to form a Judgment of my Proceedings; it is farther necessary, that I acquaint him with some Particulars in his Letters not hitherto mentioned. At the End of his *first Letter* he assures me, he speaks the Sense of a *considerable Number of my People.* And in his

*second Letter*, he says, I yet abide by it, that what I wrote was the Sense of *many of your People*. I confess this Work better becomes a graver Head, and such as bear an ancient Relation to your Society, and *who have made the same Remarks and Observations with my self*, but have not had the Courage to do it. I again venture to tell you, what few or none of your People dare to do, *tho' they make the same Complaints*.

Certainly, if any Thing ought to awaken the Concern of a Minister, This should; for hereby it appeared to me, that not only diverse Opinions *of dangerous Consequence* were spreading among some of my People (as to my Sorrow I afterwards found) but a Party was forming, which in a little Time, (if not prevented) might raise a Division and cause a Breach in the Church. Wherefore having weighed these Things seriously in my Mind, I found my self under many Obligations to take the best Care I could to preserve the Congregation from the Mischiefs that threatened it; and as herein I was not wanting in my Prayers to GOD for his Direction and Assistance, so it was my fixed Resolution in all Things, to act by Christian Rules, and in the most Christian Manner I was able; hoping that in so doing GOD would be with me, seeing the Thing I was now obliged to was purely for *necessary Self-defence*, and in Discharge of the *indispensible Duty* I owed to my Flock. Wherefore,

*April*

*April 15, 1720, I procured a Meeting of those Members of the Church, who have the Management of the common Concerns of it, to whom I added, a few more Gentlemen of the best Sense and Substance among them. The Number of the whole was Seventeen, who all met except Two, that were out of Town. I laid before them Mr. Hawkins's Letters and my Answers, which being read they gave their Opinion of them as false and scurrilous. And it appearing likely by those Letters, that there were several Malecontents in the Congregation and a Party combining against me under the plausible Pretence of pleading the Cause of the non-subscribing Ministers, and supporting in particular the Reputation and Usefulness of Mr. Read; I was asked by some, if I had no Apprehension of his being privy to them? To which I answered, I was so far from it, that on the contrary I believed, if he saw them, he would express the utmost Dislike of them, even to Detestation. Such was my real Opinion then of Mr. Read's Integrity and Friendship. It was queried, if it was not proper for me to impart the Letters to Mr. Read and know his Thoughts upon them? I told them if they judged it advisable I would, provided some of them would be with me at the Time I did it. Hereupon some Gentlemen were nominated, and desired to accompany me at the Opening of the Matter to him. These*

Gentle-

Gentlemen agreed to meet me again that Day sevensnight.

*April 22, 1720, This Day I returned from Theobalds, where I had been the greatest Part of the Week, and according to Appointment had a meeting with the Gentlemen ; when I desired their Advice how to apply to Mr. Read. They asked me my own Thoughts, but I declined giving them, only said in the general, That if Mr. Read should agree on Measures with me, and make it known to the Malecontents of the Congregation, that neither of us were to be impressed by any Attempts they should make to divide us, we should easily conquer all Difficulties.* It was again questioned, if Mr. Read might be privy to this Concern of Mr. Hawkins's, to which I replied to the same Effect as before. It happened at this Time, that Mr. Read had received the melancholy Tidings of his Mother's Death, which obliged him to take a speedy Journey to *Kedermister*, his native Place. This put us by our Design for a considerable Time, and deprived us of the Opportunity of communicating what was intended. Whereupon all Proceedings were stopped till his Return, and the Gentlemen agreed to keep Things secret to prevent a Noise in the Town. He continued several Weeks in the Country, and upon his Return, I was taken ill at *Theobalds*, with a sore Fit of the *Gravel*, which deferred it near a Fortnight longer.

But



But upon my coming to LONDON, I found this Business had taken Air, and People began to Report, that there was going to be a *Breach* in the Church. This gave me a just Concern, because hereby I feared there would be some struggle: Wherefore I thought it my Duty *before any Thing else*, to see how Matters stood among my People, and accordingly took the first Opportunity of getting a Meeting of the same Persons to whom I had communicated the Affair on *April 15.* before.

*June 14, 1720.* After solemn Prayer, I represented to them the State of the Congregation, from some Observations I had made on Mr. *Hawkins's* Letters, and the Reports I had heard without Doors. I signified how much it was my Concern to preserve them as a *Church*, and to preserve the *Truth*, which is the Foundation of *Unity* and *Bond of Peace*. I told them that as they had been just before seeking God with me for his gracious Direction, so I hoped they would with Meekness, Love and Unanimity, consult together, and give me their Thoughts upon the present State of the Congregation. In a Word, I prayed them, that with respect to my self, they would use all Freedom: That if they apprehended me guilty of what was laid to my Charge in Mr. *Hawkins's* Letters, or that I had in any Thing misbehaved my self, they would tell me of it: But if they knew me to be clear of those Charges, that then they would take some proper Method to vindicate me from the *unjust Aspersions*

*Aspersions* cast upon me, and consider what was fit to be done, in order to preserve the Peace of the Church, and ward against the Mischiefs that were impending.

As I had formed no private Schemes, made no previous Resolutions, nor concerted any secret Measures with any of them together, or asunder; so, that at this Time they might have the greater Liberty and Freedom of Debate, touching any Thing that related to my self, I offered to withdraw. But they unanimously opposed that Motion, and would not suffer me to depart: However, I took care to be *passive*, and left them to Word and do Things just as they thought fit themselves.

The *first* Thing they began upon, was the *Charges* advanced against me in Mr. *Hawkins's* Letters, touching which, they were all of them so sensible of the *Wrong* he had done me, that they most freely and readily acquitted me to a Man, being able to testify the Contrary, from their own personal Knowledge.

Indeed upon their having so done, I desired a *Memorandum* might be taken of it in the *Church-Book*, that hereafter I might have Recourse to it (if Occasion should be) for my own Vindication. Accordingly it was agreed by *all*, that a *Memorandum* should be taken of it. One of the *Gentlemen* was desired to write what should be agreed upon, in a loose Paper, and afterwards place it in the *Book*. The Things agreed *without my dictating*, stand as follow:

LONDON,

LONDON, June 14, 1720. It is agreed, viz.

" *That the two Letters, that Mr. James  
" Hawkins wrote and sent to the Reverend  
" Mr. Thomas Reynolds our Pastor, do con-  
" tain several false Aspersions, and unjust  
" Reflections.*

" *And we are of Opinion, that the Reve-  
" rend Mr. Reynolds has behaved himself as a  
" faithful Minister of Jesus Christ, and as be-  
" comes the Gospel in all respects.*

" *And whereas Mr. Reynolds did, with o-  
" thers of his Brethren at Salters-Hall, sub-  
" scribe to the first Article of the Church of  
" ENGLAND, and also to the fifth and sixth  
" Questions of the Assemblies Catechism:  
" We whose Names are under-written are  
" fully satisfied with the Conduct of our  
" Pastor.*

I forbear mentioning the Gentlemens Names, partly for brevity sake, partly because there is no need, and chiefly, because I would interest them as little as possible in a Dispute, that I am willing to take upon my self.

There were *seventeen* Persons invited to this Meeting: Those that signed were to the Number of *thirteen*, who were all that came, except one, who *refused*. It was reported of one of the *absent Gentlemen*, that he had signified his Disapprobation of our Meeting, and it was thought he would *come no more* to us. I went to that Gentleman the next Day, who

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was

was so far from disapproving our Proceedings, that to testify his Approbation of them, he did of his *own Motion* send his Servant, while I was with him, for the *Church-Book*, and wrote the following Lines without my using any *Persuasions*, or suggesting *any Thing* to him.

*I could not conveniently come on the 14<sup>th</sup> past, to the Meeting of the Reverend Mr. Reynolds, and the Members of the Congregation then met. I do assent and consent, and am well satisfied in the Conduct of the Reverend Mr. Reynolds, in what he has transacted in the Affair mentioned on the other side, [opposite Page] and never had any Scruple or Hesitation therein. Therefore do subscribe, as I should have done if present. This Gentleman came to a following Meeting, when Mr. Read was with us.*

Two other Gentlemen, that had likewise been invited to this Meeting, *signed afterwards*, which made up the Number *sixteen*.

After this, *June 16, 1720*. I sent the *Clark*, to desire as many to come to my House as my Room would contain: To these I also read Mr. *Hawkins's* Letters, and my Answers, and shewed them what the Gentlemen before spoken of had done, asked their Advice, and offered to withdraw, but they were against it. After a little Time they testified as follows, without *my dictating*.

*We*



*We whose Names are underwritten, do voluntarily agree and concur with our Brethren, in vindicating our Reverend Pastor, from the unjust Reflections cast upon him by Mr. Hawkins, in his two Letters; and also do voluntarily agree, and heartily concur with those who have subscribed their Approbation of his Conduct, in the foregoing Leaf. All present signed, to the Number of seventeen.*

After this, I had one or two Meetings more at my own House, the Number of all that came and *voluntarily* concurred with their *Brethren* in signing the *Testimonial* that was given of me, amounted (with those who first of all signed) to above *threescore*. Of those that came to my House, there were two that made the following Declarations. One that he had like to have been corrupted by a *bad Man* (as he called him) but he died about a Year since. He said *that Christ was God; but then he had a God above him*. The other declared at the same Time, that a certain *Member* of a Church discoursing with him, said: *That a Trinity of Persons in the GOD HEAD was an Absurdity, and could never be reconciled to Reason.*

Besides the abovementioned, there are others who were then out of Town, or could not come by Reason of other Engagements, who, if needful, would be heartily ready to follow the Example of their Brethren.

Thus far I have delivered a true and genuine

Account of my whole Management, with respect to Mr. *Hawkins*, and the Reasons that induced me to take the Steps I have mentioned.

But before I dismiss this Matter, I must take Notice of the *false Reports*, that were spread during the Time it was transacting.

One was, that *I went from House to House, or sent Notes about to procure my Peoples Hands, and that I obliged them to sign the first Article of the Church of ENGLAND, and the Answers to the fifth and sixth Questions in the Assemblies Catechism.* Whereas I went to no Man's House, nor sent any Note to such Purpose, nor tampered with any Man to draw him into that which was subscribed; but left them all to their *own Judgment*, and to word and do as they *thought fit* themselves. And *all* that my People signified under their Hands, was only their Approbation of *my Conduct*, as to my subscribing at *Salters-Hall*. So far were they from being put to *subscribe* the Article and Answers, that they were not so much as desired to declare their *own Sense* about subscribing, or non-subscribing: But only as I had judged it *my Duty* to subscribe, they thought fit to express their Opinion, that in my so doing, I conducted my self as an *honest Man*. And herein I am so charitable as to think, that none of the *Non-Subscribers themselves* will venture to profess their difference in Judgment from them.

It was farther reported, that one of the Gentlemen, who had subscribed the Testimonial

nial given me, had declared himself *sorry for what he had done, that he was over persuaded to it by Mr. Reynolds, but repented of it.* Two of the Church were deputed *on purpose* to the Person of whom this was given out, who *utterly denied* his saying any such Thing, and declared, *he signed freely and voluntarily, not by any Compulsion whatsoever.* This is testified under their Hands.

But that which I take to be the heaviest Part of the Charge laid against me, is, what Mr. *Hawkins* asserts in his *Letter*, Namely, that in the Pulpit *I appeared discomposed and ruffled in Mind, full of angry Resentments: That I expressed my self in an unguarded Manner against Error and Heresy; and that I censured the Non-Subscribers as Arians*, which is as false as other Calumnies, that have been spread about to my Disreputation and Prejudice. As to the *Discomposure and Resentments of my Mind*, I can truly say, I am not conscious of them. I hope I may be allowed to be the *best Judge* of the *Frame* of my own Spirit; and though in his *second Letter*, he tells me, *it was so visible as to furnish Discourse in Coffee-Houses*, I am not to be impressed by what a few *prejudiced and malevolent* People may have reported in such Places; where many Stories, as false as this, have been reported. Those of my People who gave their *constant Attendance* on my Ministry, have sufficiently acquitted me of this, as well as his other Imputations. As to the following  
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part of this Charge, though I am intirely in Sentiment with those of my *Brethren*, who upon the Reports that were spread (as if the *LONDON Ministers* were not sound in the Faith, and particularly in Relation to the Doctrine of the *Holy Trinity*,) thought it their Duty to wipe off those Calumnies, by a publick Confession of their Faith, signed with their Hand, according to what has been practised by the *Reformed* in like Cases\*; and though I cannot but think the refusing of it at such a Time, gave great Encouragement to Error: Yet that I may clear my self of the *unjust Aspersions* that have been cast upon me, I shall give a *faithful Account* of my Behaviour since our unhappy Differences.

It may be remembered, that upon the *Division* at *Salter's-Hall*, many Pamphlets came Abroad, and the first from themselves, † (tho' it was declared that bare Non-subscribing was not taken as a sufficient Ground for the Charge of *Arianism*) besides Papers dispersed up and down in *Coffee-Houses* containing very gross and dangerous Errors, with *grievous* and *unjust* Reflections on those that had owned the *common Faith*, by subscribing it: Such as these, *lessening the Authority and Perfection of the*

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\* See Declaration of the Opinion of the *French Ministers, Refugees* in *England*, about some Points in Religion, in Opposition to the *Socinians*, signed in an *Assembly* at *LONDON*, by ninety six Hands, *March 30, 1691.*

† Letter to Dr. Gale, &c.



*holy Scriptures, imposing on their Brethren, favouring Persecution, setting up an Inquisition, the worst Things in Popery.* All which were charged upon the *Subscribers*. I was apprehensive of the evil Consequences hereof, especially with Respect to some of my younger People, that discovered too great an Attention to Novelty, and were taken with the modern Way of writing. Wherefore I thought it my Duty in Faithfulness to God, and those under my Care, to take such Opportunities as did offer, in the Course of my Ministry, (~~at~~ which ~~was~~ ~~not~~ allowed on both Sides with Reference to our own People) to caution them against the Errors that were spreading abroad, and to inform them of the Reasons, that induced me to subscribe the *most important* Article in our Religion, as expressed by the *Church of ENGLAND* and in the *Assemblies Catechism*; thereby to guard them against the Impressions, which many *bitter Reflections* from several Quarters might make upon them.

But when I did this, I not only forbore passing harsh Censures upon the *Non-subscribing Brethren*, but *publickly* declared, that I believed *many*, and I hoped *most* of them (I could not say *all*, consistent with Truth) to be of the *same Faith* with us in this great Article, altho' they had refused to declare it in the *same Manner* as we had done. And when I said any thing (tho' with no View to them, yet) lest it might be interpreted

pretered a Reflection upon them, I desired  
 People not to mistake me, as if I intended  
 by it a sly *Insinnation* to their Prejudice,  
 which I told them was a Practice I *abhorred*  
 (and therefore wonder how Mr. *Hawkins*  
 could charge me with *Innuendo's* and *Insinnu-*  
*ations* in his Letter I.) but that I therein re-  
 ferred only to those *Books* and *People*, who  
*openly denied* and *blasphemously derided* the  
 Doctrine of the ever blessed Trinity. Nor did  
 I rest here, but recommended to them with  
 much Earnestness, a Spirit of *Meekness* and  
*Charity*, praying them to *ascertain* the *best*  
*Thoughts* of those my Brethren, and not  
 give Way to *groundless Surmises* concerning  
 them, but carry it with Respect to their *Per-*  
*sons* and *Ministry*; telling them, that they  
 might be easy under this Assurance, that as  
 soon as it should appear any were *departed*  
 from the Doctrine, they would have Warn-  
 ing of it. Of all this I have *hundreds* my  
 Witnesses.

Now saving to my self the Liberty of vindic-  
 ating my *own Act* and that of *my Brethren*,  
 which was so much exclaimed against, what  
 could I well do more, or what could my *Non-*  
*subscribing Brethren* desire more of me to pre-  
 serve their Reputation and Usefulness, than  
 what I have done? Nay, so great and ob-  
 servable has my *Tenderness* for them been,  
 that several of my *very dear Friends*,  
 have thought me too much in Charity  
 with them. So that whilst <sup>by</sup> those of the  
 Non-

*non-subscribing Side*, I have been proclaimed and set forth as a rash, warm and ignorant *Zealot* ; I have by others been censured as too mild, too yielding and charitable. This has been my hard Lot, tho' I humbly trust the LORD will give me Patience still to keep on in that Way, which appears to me to be the *Christian's Duty*.



### SECTION III.

*A faithful Relation of the Affair between Mr. Read and me from the Conference I had with him to his Dismission.*



Proceed now to what does more nearly concern Mr. *Read*, and the Causes of his *Dismission*. The *Gentlemen* having cleared me from the Charges of Mr. *Hawkins's* Letters, the next Step was, to advise how to prevent the Mischief that threatened the *Congregation*.

I have already acquainted the *Reader* with what passed *April 15, 1720*. when at my *Request* some *Gentlemen* were desired to accompany me at the Time I should impart Mr. *Hawkins's* Letters to Mr. *Read*, but his

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Mother's Death and my Illness, which detain'd me in the Country, prevented what was designed for several Weeks.

Having upon my Return to LONDON dispatched Mr. *Hawkins's* Affair, which was *then* most urgent; I lost no Time, but desired a Meeting with the Gentlemen aforesaid.

June 24, 1720. They came to the Number of *Four*. They were *Six* in all, but of the other two, one was in the Country, and the other unavoidably hindred by Business. Those that met, did without any Design or Suggestion of mine, either before, or at this Time, concur in Opinion, that it was most adviseable I should impart the *Letters* and confer with Mr. *Read* alone about the Contents of them. They judg'd it would be too *formal* and *solemn*, and might make too great an *Impression* upon him for them to attend me. That it was most probable he would take it better, and therefore they thought it would be a better Way for me to do it by my self. Upon these Reasons, and their making it their joint Advice, I submitted to it. I acquainted them at this Meeting with some *Proposals*, which if Mr. *Read* should approve, I had thought on, as the best Expedient for obviating any Evils that might arise. I told them,

That it was not my Intention nor ever in my *Thought* that Mr. *Read* be desired to *subscribe*, since he had declared his judgment against it.



Only that he be willing to satisfy me or my People (*if desired*) that he does heartily agree with us in Sentiment concerning the *great Articles* of our Faith, and especially the *Truth and Importance* of the Doctrine of the *blessed Trinity*.

Upon his so doing, I should be ready to signify the same to my People, or any else, in such manner as should be thought proper, and clear Mr. *Read* of any false Charges or Accusations, which should be laid against him.

Furthermore I should be ready to do my *utmost* to persuade such of my People as might be dissatisfied with Mr. *Read*, to attend his Ministry and continue their Encouragement to it.

On the other Hand I told them, I claimed the *Right and Liberty*, as Pastor of the Church, to assert the *Truth and Importance* of the Doctrine of the Trinity, as hitherto believed by us, and to vindicate my Act of *subscribing* it, as oft as I should see *Occasion*, without Let or Hindrance from Mr. *Read* in the *Pulpit* or *private Conversation* with any of my People.

That I also expected Mr. *Read* should freely and heartily concur with me in his Endeavours to satisfy those of my People, that had taken Disgust at what I thought my Duty for maintaining the Truth, and cautioning them against Error; and that he would use his Endeavours with me to convince them,

that their absenting from my Ministry was *disorderly* and *irregular*; and that their seeming to side with him in Opposition to me, and causing thereby a Division in the Church, was what he disapproved, and would by no Means countenance.

Finally, if after his and my Endeavours thus used, any of the Members should still absent themselves from my Ministry, I then proposed, that such Persons be desired in a silent and peaceable Way to withdraw and place themselves under a Ministry, that might be more to their Satisfaction.

By these *Proposals* I hoped I had not only made Provision for the Exercise of my own *Right*, but had sufficiently consulted Mr. *Read's Liberty* and *Interest*, and likewise the *Liberty* of those that were dissatisfied with my Ministry. All the Gentlemen did approve of them as reasonable.

After this I said, That in conferring with Mr. *Read* I should be willing of two Things. The one, that in Case of *Difference*, we should minute the Substance of what might be offered on one Side and t'other to prevent Mistakes. The other, if I found myself or Mr. *Read* inclined to grow warm, immediately to break off the Conference. This they likewise approved of.

In Pursuance of their Advice, I took the first Opportunity of speaking to Mr. *Read*, which was the *Lord's Day* following. *June 27,*

1720. when I craved some Discourse with him on the Morrow. He endeavoured to excuse it, but I told him it was about a Matter of Importance, however, upon his declining it, I ceased pressing him, and said he was at his Liberty.

He saw fit to alter his Mind, and came to my House the next Morning, when we had a long *Conference* without Heat or Passion on either side, concerning the Contents of Mr. *Hawkins's* Letters, which I shewed him. I shall wave relating here what passed between us, till I come to the Report I made of it to the Gentlemen of the Church, and shall mention no more, than that in the Conclusion I told him the *Necessity* there was of his and my being of a Mind in the Matters we had discoursed of, and that *evil Consequences* might follow upon a Difference in Sentiment. I shewed him the forementioned *Proposals* which I had written in a Paper, and spoke to him about an Article to be added; but on his objecting to it, I promised it should not be mentioned. I proposed also the *minuting* what we had discoursed of, but he said we might trust one another. I desired him to think on what we had talked upon, and invited him to dine with me the *Wednesday* following; when I would willingly confer with him again on those Matters, and I *thought* I had a Promise from him. He did not come as I expected: However the Day after, I found an Opportunity to ask him, if he had thought on  
what

what we last discoursed about? All I could obtain for Answer was; *It would take up a long Time to think of it.* By this I saw his End was to *delay Matters* as much as he could. Wherefore the next Morning I sent him the following Letter.

Friday July 1, 1720.

SIR,

**I**N discoursing with you at my House  
 “ concerning the Contents of Mr. *Haw-*  
 “ *kins's* Letters, and my Answer to them,  
 “ the Matters we debated most upon did (as  
 “ I apprehend) rest chiefly on these two  
 “ Points.

“ 1. *Whether a Person that pays religious*  
 “ *Worship to Christ, but at the same Time*  
 “ *disowns him to be truly and properly GOD,*  
 “ (that is, in the strictest and strongest Sense  
 “ of the Word) *be chargeable with downright*  
 “ *Idolatry.*

“ 2. *Whether such a one has forfeited his*  
 “ *Claim to Christian Communion?*

“ As to both these Questions, I hold the  
 “ *Affirmative.* I desire you will let me know  
 “ by a Line, whether you freely and readily  
 “ concur with me, in *affirming* the same? I  
 “ pray your Answer some time before *Monday*  
 “ *Evening* next, because at five o' Clock  
 “ I purpose to go out of Town, in Case my  
 “ Affairs will permit. I am

*Your loving Brother, and faithful Friend,*

THO. REYNOLDS.

Being



Being in Company with him the same Day, I told him I had left a Letter for him at his Lodging, and should wait his Answer. But though I waited a *Fortnight*, and in that Time personally applied to him again and again, yet neither by Word of Mouth, nor by Letter, could I obtain an Answer to my Questions.

During this Delay, Mr. *Hawkins* was very busy in his Endeavours to raise Discontents among my People, which called for a *speedy Remedy*, though none could be effectually applied, till Mr. *Read* and I understood one another, to which I found he was by no Means forward or inclined. Wherefore it appearing plain, that a Party was forming against me, as well as Insinuations had been given out, that a Difference with Mr. *Read*, would cause a great Division in the Church; I saw it necessary to have a Meeting as soon as I could of the Gentlemen that manage the Affairs of the Congregation, and other principal Members, to which I invited Mr. *Read* by the following Letter.

Thursday July 14, 1720.

SIR,

I intend to procure a Meeting of the principal Members of the Church in the little Room over the *Weigh-house* to Morrow Afternoon at three o' Clock, when I shall report to them the Result of the Conference between you and me, in relation

" tion to the *Letters*, which upon their Ad-  
 " vice I communicated to you. I would by  
 " no Means incur the *least Mistake*, and there-  
 " fore pray you will be present, that the Mat-  
 " ter may be *truly* and *fairly* represented.  
 " I am

*Your loving Brother,*

*and faithful Friend,*

THO. REYNOLDS.

*July 15, 1720.* Mr. *Read* was pleased to  
 be with us. The Number of those present  
 were *fourteen*, beside him and my self: There  
 were *three* more desired to meet us, *two* of  
 whom happened to be out of Town, and the  
*third* was hindred by urgent Business. After  
 serious Prayer to God, I acquainted them how  
 sorry I was for the Occasion of the present  
 Meeting. Told them, they knew the Purport  
 of Mr. *Hawkins's* Letters, which obliged me  
 to consult them about fit Measures to preserve  
 the Peace of the Congregation: that those  
 Gentlemen whom I had desired to act with  
 me in imparting the Letters to Mr. *Read*, had  
 thought it most adviseable for me to do it at  
 first by my self; that accordingly I had so  
 done, and was now come to report the Re-  
 sult of the *Conference* between him and me,  
 having desired him to be present, that he

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might

might see Matters *truly* and *fairly* represented, and correct me, if in any Thing I was mistaken.

In order to this, I reminded them of the Proposals, I had formerly mentioned to them, as the best Expedient I could think of to preserve Peace in the Church; and having them in Writing, I read them. They are those in page 34. I then gave them the following general and short Account of what had passed between Mr. *Read* and me at my House. I told them, that on their Advice I had imparted to him Mr. *Hawkins's* Letters, and my Answer, that we had a long Discourse about some Points, concerning which, I should have been glad to have received more Satisfaction from him than I did: That as to my Opinion of Mr. *Read's* Ignorance of the Letters, I was not mistaken; but it gave me much Concern, that in order to make a *true* and *faithful* Report, I found my self under the *unhappy* Necessity of acquainting them, that instead of shewing so great a *Dislike* of Mr. *Hawkins's* Letters as I expected, he not only endeavoured to excuse the *abusive* Manner of them as much as he was able, but (which was Matter of the greatest Grief) he appeared to me to countenance the Opinions advanced in them, which I take to be of *dangerous* Consequence. I told them, I had desired him to take *Time* to consider of them, and had communicated to him the Proposals, that had been read to them, and invited him to my House in order to confer again;

but on his failing to come, I wrote him a Letter with two Questions in it, and prayed his Answer. The Letter I read to them, which is before in page 38. That I had personally applied to him several Times, but could obtain no Answer. In a Word, I said I should have took it kindly if he had used more Freedom with me, but since he was not pleased to do it, I had by Letter desired him to give me a Meeting before them; and being now present, I desired he would gratify me and the Gentlemen, in letting us know, whether in relation to the *two Questions* I had sent him, he was with me in the *Affirmative*?

He waved it as long as he could, pretending he did not know what *Connexion* there was between Mr. *Hawkins's* Letters, or preserving the Peace of the Congregation, and his answering these Questions: That he never preached any Thing of *Arianism*, and kept running from one Thing to another as long as he could, to every one's Surprise; but upon my holding him to the Questions, and speaking seriously to him, he at last said, *He could not be with me in the Affirmative of those Questions*. This gave Concern to the whole Company, who did not expect such an Answer from him, and were *universally* dissatisfied at it. Soon after this we broke up.

I must crave Leave to observe upon his Answer, that his saying not only that he *was not* with me in the *Affirmative* of the Questions, but *could not* be with me, (even after he had a *Fortnight's* Time to consider and consult



*consult his Friends upon them* ) was in my Apprehension more than a bare *Negative*. I must take it, that he had thought of the Matter, and had such strong Reasons on the contrary Side, that *He neither was nor could be with me in the Affirmative*.

July 19, 1720. We had another Meeting. Ten present, the rest out of Town, or hindred by Business. The End of my giving them this Trouble was, to read the principal Things of the last Meeting, which I had set down rough as they occurred to my Memory ; they thought them a true Account. At the Close of this Meeting, one of the Gentlemen declared it as his Opinion, that *we should part with Mr. Read*, and this was the *first* Time that any Thing of this Nature had been mentioned among us. Nor was this, and what after followed, through any *Instigation* of mine ; tho' after they had declared themselves, I owned my Judgment was intirely with them.

July 20, 1720. The Gentlemen met me once more, to the Number of *Nine*, the rest prevented as before, except *One*, who sided with Mr. *Read*, and when sent for, said, *he would come no more to these Meetings*. I reminded them in the general, of what had passed on the 15<sup>th</sup> of this *Month*, when Mr. *Read* was present. That with Reference to the *two Questions* I then proposed to him, *He had declared in all their Hearing, he could not be with me in the Affirmative*. I therefore

desired their Advice about what was fit to be farther done. Upon this they agreed to a Resolution that was written by one of the Gentlemen, and is as follows.

*We the Underwritten finding Mr. Read to differ in his Sentiments from Mr. Reynolds in some Points, that we hold of Consequence in Religion; do not see how they can discharge the Office of the Ministry together consistent with the Peace and Edification of our Church. Wherefore we are of Opinion, that Mr. Reynolds, our Pastor, do part with Mr. Read, and desire it may be done as speedily, and in as friendly a Manner as may be. To this all present subscribed their Hands. However, I determined not to proceed upon their Advice only, but to have the Sense of the whole Church upon it. Accordingly,*

*Lord's Day Afternoon, July 24, 1720. Publick Worship being over, the Clark, by Order, desired all the Men, who were Members of the Church, to stay, which they did to near the Number of Seventy. After Prayer to God for Direction, that I might let them into the Reason of calling them together, I told them, they were apprized of the Letters I had received from Mr. Hawkins, wherein he assured me, he spake the Sense of many of my Church; acquainted them with all the Steps I had taken in Relation to that Affair; That several of those Gentlemen were then*

then present to attest the Truth of Facts; That the Design of calling the Church together was to know their Sense in Relation to their Desire of my parting with Mr. Read.

After some Silence. one of the Gentlemen stood up, and declared it as his Opinion, that we should speedily part with Mr. Read. On the other Side it was replied, that Mr. Read was no *Arian*; That he was sound in the Doctrine of the Trinity, and never had delivered any Thing from the *Pulpit* that should give the least Cause to question it; and seeing he had said nothing from the Pulpit that was exceptionable, it was hard he should be charged as an *Arian*, or Words to that Effect.

In Answer to this, I said, that charging him as an *Arian* was an *artful Insinuation* and a Mistake. I called the whole Society to witness, it was not the Matter in Charge against him, but his not affirming with me, that a Person who worships Christ, tho' he denies him to be God, is guilty of *Idolatry*, and has forfeited his Claim to Christian *Communion*. His differing from me in these Points would in our present Circumstances produce very mischievous Effects in the Congregation. It must cover and countenance *Arianism*, open the Church Doors to it, and cherish it when entred in. Put Case that in a Time of abounding Error (as the present is), any of my People should become *Arians*, or disbelieve the real GODHEAD of *Christ*, could Mr.

Read

*Read* join with me in convincing them of Idolatry and Unfitness for Christian Communion? No, he must withstand and oppose me. Should I suspend, or refuse the *Communion* to such, (or any others, whatever their Opinions be, provided they own themselves Christians, and are not guilty of gross Immoralities) he must condemn my so doing. What in probability will follow upon this? Why, a War in my Church, and Mr. *Read* at the Head of it. How then can he be my *Assistant*, when according to his Sentiments he must pull down what I should think my Duty to build up? There is no discerning Person but must see, that a Difference of this Nature, leading to such a Difference in Conduct, could afford no Prospect of Comfort, or tend to the Church's Peace.

To this it was replied, That the Business of receiving and excluding Members belonging to me as *Pastor*, Mr. *Read* need not interfere with me in that Concern.

I answered, Granting it, yet how could he in this Case do the Part of an *Assistant*? in which I should expect his Help, and it may be, need it more than in any other. Besides, I may now add, that it is hardly to be conceived he should keep himself *neuter*. I had already seen the contrary, and began to feel the ill Effects of it in the Affair of Mr. *Hawkins*. For tho' I believed him ignorant of the Letters Mr. *Hawkins* sent me, I cannot be so clear in thinking he was ignorant of his



his Opinions. 'Tis plain he abetted them at a Time it had begun a Division in the Church, and threatned a farther one. And how can any Man, that will put himself in my Circumstances, be for continuing such an one as *his Assistant*, that shall abet and countenance those, who are endeavouring to divide and break his Church in pieces?

There were other Altercations about *Creeds* and *Catechisms*, but as these were altogether foreign to the Point in Hand, I shall not prolong the Account, or tire the *Reader's* Patience with the Rehearsal of them.

The last thing which caused Debate, was a Motion, *that the Meeting be adjourned to that Day sevensnight, and Mr. Read desired to be present.* It was urged on Mr. *Read's* Side, that he ought to be there and speak for himself. It was offered on the other, that *he had been heard*, and declared himself in the hearing of several present, who being appealed to, attested the Truth of the Fact. To question the Veracity of so many Gentlemen, was to destroy common Faith. Supposing another Meeting and Mr. *Read* present, what must be debated? Why, whether he did agree with me in the Questions, or no. But this was altogether needless, seeing he had declared himself before these Gentlemen. Therefore the present Matter, upon which the Church's Sense was to be asked, being notorious and incontestible, the desiring a farther Adjournment could be intended for no other Purpose,

Purpose, than to gain Time to make a farther Clamour in the Town, and by false Representations and cunning Arts (of which we had Experience enough already) to amuse, perplex and stagger the Minds of my People.

However, notwithstanding this, those that were for Mr. Read still insisted on it, that he should be there. But since they could not deny that Mr. Read was not with me in the Questions, and I foresaw the Mischief intended by a Delay, I did express my Judgment against it. The Matter having been debated for a considerable while, Mr. Read's Friends moved for the Question, which was agreed to. And it was put,

*That there be another Meeting next Lord's Day, and Mr. Read desired to be present. Six or seven Hands for it; the rest against it.*

Then it was put,

*That I part with Mr. Read, and do it as speedily and in as friendly a Manner as may be. The whole Church for it, except Six.*

Hereupon many rejoiced, blessing God to find this troublesome Affair issued with so much Unanimity, and comforted and strengthened one another. In Pursuance of this I sent the following Letter to Mr. Read.

Tuesday July 26, 1720.

SIR,

“ **A**T a Meeting with several of my People, since that which I had with you

“ at

" at the *Weigh-house*. They have agreed in  
 " the following Sentiment.

" *LONDON, July 20, 1720. We*  
 " *the underwritten finding Mr. Read to dis-*  
 " *fer in his Sentiments from Mr. Reynolds*  
 " *in some Points, that we hold of Conse-*  
 " *quence in Religion; do not see, how they*  
 " *can discharge the Office of the Ministry to-*  
 " *gether consistent with the Peace and Edi-*  
 " *fication of our Church. And therefore, we*  
 " *are of Opinion, that Mr. Reynolds our Pa-*  
 " *stor do part with Mr. Read, and desire it*  
 " *may be done as speedily and in as friendly a*  
 " *Manner as may be.*

Signed by

J—S. J—K. O—L. J—C. J—S.  
 J—R. E—H. F—H. T—C.

" In Answer to the Desire of these Gen-  
 " tlemen, I had a Meeting of all the Mem-  
 " bers of the Church that were present, last  
 " *Lord's Day* after Sermon, when being  
 " by Computation in Number between *six-*  
 " *ty and seventy*, after several Debates, the  
 " Things following were put to the Question,  
 " That there be another Meeting next *Lord's*  
 " *Day*, and Mr. *Read* desired to be present.  
 " About *six* or *seven* Hands on the Affir-  
 " mative, That I part with Mr. *Read*, and  
 " do it as speedily and in as friendly a Man-

G

" ner

“ ner as may be: About *five* or *six* on  
 “ the Negative. So that there was about *ten*  
 “ to *one* Difference.

“ I am deeply affected with the Occasion  
 “ that has laid me under the *Necessity* of im-  
 “ parting this to you, and farther acquainting  
 “ you, that I shall make *other Provision* for  
 “ my People next *Lord's Day* Morning, and  
 “ the like for the *future*.

“ Your Disagreement with me in Senti-  
 “ ment about Matters of so great Conse-  
 “ quence, and your Way of managing, have  
 “ given me and my People a World of Trou-  
 “ ble and Grief, both on your own and ma-  
 “ ny other Accounts that are obvious. I have  
 “ always testified a just Esteem and Love for  
 “ you, and have had a great deal of Ease and  
 “ Pleasure in the Concurrence of your La-  
 “ bours with me, and should have rejoiced  
 “ as much as any Man in the Continuance  
 “ of it, had not this Difference rendered it  
 “ *utterly inconsistent* with my own and the  
 “ Peace and Edification of my People. But  
 “ these Things, and the Concern I have for  
 “ Truth, must take Place of *Personal Re-*  
 “ *gards*. However, as the Resolution, that  
 “ has been taken by me and my People,  
 “ has not proceeded from *any private Pique*,  
 “ but from *Conscience* and necessary *Self-de-*  
 “ *fence*; so I shall endeavour to be as much  
 “ your Friend, as I can consistent with these,  
 “ and the Duties I owe to God and those  
 “ he



“ he hath placed under my Care. I there-  
 “ fore still subscribe my self,

*Your faithful Friend,*

*tho' much afflicted Brother,*

THO. REYNOLDS.

P. S. Sir, my People will continue their  
 Subscriptions to you till Michaelmas  
 next.

To this *faithful Account* I have given of  
 the Concern between Mr. *Read* and me, I  
 shall only add, that tho' it is possible, I may  
 not in every Particular have conducted my  
 self agreeably to every Man's Judgment (*diffi-*  
*cile est placere omnibus*) yet I can truly  
 say, I have in all Things acted according  
 to the best of my own. I am sensible, no  
 Proceedings of Men (where there are con-  
 tending Parties) can be so managed, but  
 there will be some, who will *pretend at least*,  
 something to carp at and blame, even tho'  
 there be no *real Cause* for it. But I hope  
 there are none will be able, justly to charge  
 me with *material* and *wilful* Mistakes.



## SECTION IV.

*Containing Answers to various Reports and Objections.*



Now crave the Reader's Patience, whilst I offer something in my *Vindication* against the Reports that were framed and spread on Purpose to favour Mr. *Read*, and incense the World against me, and those, who had parted with him. I do not pretend to assign Mr. *Browne*, or Mr. *Read*, as the immediate *Authors* of them; or trace them up to their first *Springs*; but that such Reports have been, and *continue* to be *spread* to my Disadvantage, and are to this Day *believed* by many, is notorious, and therefore I think it necessary to reply to them.

After his *Dismission* I had only the Opportunity of one *Lord's Day* to preach and administer the Sacrament, before I fell into such Indisposition of Body, as gave little hope of Life, occasioned very much through the *Fatigue* and *Concern* I had, about this troublesome and perplexing Affair. I was confined for above three Months, in which Time my Character was much insulted and abused; artful Methods were used to dissuade and draw away People from me, and to distress me all they could. Besides those Things I knew, there were I doubt not many more that  
are

are still hid from me; but that which I take to be very unmerciful, was the spreading of lying Reports concerning my *Sickness*; as that it had affected my Head, that I should never more be able to appear in a Pulpit, &c. I take this Occasion most thankfully to own the adorable Goodness of God, who restored me; I hope in Answer to the many Prayers of my Friends and Brethren, and that during the Time of my great Indisposition, through their kind Help, the Church was preserved; so that except those few, that went off with Mr. *Read*, I don't remember above *two*, that afterwards left us. And if of about three hundred Communicants, *ten* or *twelve* should be deluded and led away (though I ought to be sorry for it, yet) my *Adversaries* have no great Reason to boast.

The Time would fail me to relate all the idle, ridiculous, and inconsistent Stories, that were vented in all Companies, and sent by Letter to distant Parts. *Bath* and *Tunbridge* (where our Friends of the best Fashion and Substance are used to resort in Summer) rang with invidious Reflections; at the latter of which Places, very rash and unchristian Censures were passed upon us from the *Pulpit*; I cannot but acknowledge my Obligations to those Gentlemen who testified their Resentments of this Injustice. In *Ireland* and other Parts I have been strangely represented, and to this Day am hardly thought and spoken of.

Here

Here at LONDON, in one of the most publick *Coffee-Houses* near the *Exchange*, our Proceedings were called a Piece of *complicated Villany*, and *Presbyterian Priest-Craft* with a Witness, and it was confidently denied, that an *Adjournment* to the next *Lord's Day*, when Mr. *Read* should be present, was so much as put to the *Question*. The Person who with great *Assurance* affirmed all this to a *Friend* of mine, before a Company of near *twenty Gentlemen*, came indeed the next Day, begged his Pardon, and owned he was wrong, but that he had it from such a Person whose Name he mentioned. My Friend thereupon applied to that Party, who denied, that ever he spake such a Word to him or any Body else. For which Reason he was not satisfied with this private Acknowledgment, but insisted upon his owning the Falshood in the same Manner as he had proclaimed it, but I cannot learn that he ever did so.

Another Report was, that Mr. *Read* was ejected for *Non subscribing*. This Calumny Mr. *Browne* is pleased to espouse and confirm with the Weight of his Authority. See p. 33. *Edit. 1.* I know not what Endeavours he used to be well and truly informed, but I am sure nothing is more false. Though upon the Choice of an Assistant, I should desire one, who would no more scruple *subscribing* than my self, yet Mr. *Read* being settled with me (presuming he was sound in his Opinions) I was so far from breaking with him upon this Score,



Score, that I made *express Provision* against it, and declared, that *it was not my Intention, nor ever in my Thought, that he should be desired to subscribe, seeing his Judgment was against it.* But though this was well known, yet his *Non-subscribing* must be reported as the *Cause* of his Ejection.

It was farther insinuated, that *ever since his Non-subscribing I had conceived a secret Grudge against him,* nay they carried it still higher, to the Time *a Present had been made him by some young Men of the Church.* And will they thus venture to judge the Secrets of my Heart? What is become of all that Charity that is *so much talked of* among these *egregious Disciples* of it! May God forgive them! When I heard that my parting with Mr. Read was imputed to a *Grudge,* I mentioned this *very Passage* of the PRESENT, as a *Proof* in my Vindication; alledging, that if I was of a grudging Temper, some (had it been known) would have thought I had *Occasion* for it *Tears* before that, when those young Men (among whom Mr. *Hawkins* was a principal Verb) by a Collection raised privately among themselves, made that *Present* to him. But though I knew of it, I not only took no Notice of it, but did every where, and to every one continue to speak of Mr. *Read,* and carry it to him with the same Respect as I did before. And if this be not enough, I can farther say in Truth, that I bore him no Grudge, But what I thus brought as

an *Argument* in my Vindication, when they understood I knew of the Matter, they turned it against me. What Fence can a Man have against the Tongues of such People?

The same wicked Spirit insinuated (where it could) that *I envied him for his superior Abilities*. But why should I do that? When I had double the *Audience* in the Afternoon, to what he had in the Morning, and those Persons of as good Sense and Fashion. Few I believe will be impressed by this invidious Suggestion, who know the Concern I have had both before and since his Relation to me (having had the whole Care of it upon my self) to provide such for *my Assistants*, as all the World will judge (without any lessening of *Mr. Read*) to be no way inferior to him in ministerial Abilities. And if on this or the foregoing Account, or any other, I had born a *Grudge* to him, how comes it, that I did not close with so fair an Opportunity of easing my self of him, as I had when asked to resign him to a considerable Post at *Rotterdam*; but opposed it heartily, and was under a deep Concern upon the moving of it to me? The Truth of which there are those, who are able and ready to attest. And if after this, any will still judge my Heart, I can do no more than appeal to God as my *Witness*, that in providing Persons to assist me, I have always denied my self, and never suffered the *superior Abilities* of any Man to be an Objection with me, but have made it my Care to recommend to my  
People

People such, as would be most acceptable to them, how much soever I might think them to exceed me : Herein I am persuaded they will be Witnesses for me. The Consciousness of my Innocence makes me reject these Calumnies with Scorn, and excites my Pity to the Authors of them.

Another Reason given of his Ejection was, *Because he would not pronounce Damnation on all those, that were not of my Opinion in the Doctrine of the Trinity.* Whoever he be that formed this Report, he is a *false Accuser.* I hope I dread invading the divine *Prerogative* as well as others. I may judge of Men's *Sins*, though I offer not to pass a definitive Sentence upon any Man's *State*, but must leave that to God, as I have all along declared. I never desired Mr. *Read* to do that, which I durst not do my self. The Gentlemen are Witnesses, that I proposed no more than the two Questions to him.

But one of the most popular Clamours against me is, that Mr. *Read* being ignorant of my *Design*, I drew him into a private Conference, and notwithstanding I encouraged him to use Freedom with me by an Engagement of *Secrecy*, I afterwards betrayed the Conversation. I utterly deny the Charge, and if Mr. *Read* has given any Handle to it, I shall be grieved for him. Can he say it in Truth that he was intirely ignorant of the Design of imparting the Letters to him ? How was it then, that he should tell me but a few Days before,

of his being informed of all that passed? Naming the Person that told him? What Tricks did I use to draw him into it, when I gave him fair Notice beforehand, and told him I had a Matter of Importance to impart? As to *Secrecy* I solemnly aver, that I laid my self under no Engagements to it. Nor did he *use Freedom*, but was much on the Reserve, and when I complained of it, said, *he ought to be on his Guard*; as being well aware (I doubt not) before he came, of the Business I had with him. If I was guilty of betraying Conversation, why did he not charge me with it, when by Letter I first made known to him my Intention of making Report to the Gentlemen? Or why did he not when met together? This is an Excuse contrived afterwards (not I hope by himself) but some pretended Friend, to put the better *Colour* on his Cause, and render me the more *odious*. But as I was under *no Engagements* to Secrecy, so I know no *Rule* of private Conversation, that obliges me to conceal a Matter of the most *mischievous* Tendency, and thereby deprive my self of the Use of proper and necessary *Means* to guard against it. This Charge of *betraying Conversation* is a late Invention, to prevent the *discovering* of those who are instilling Notions in secret, which at present they dare not openly own: But I am not to be deterred from my Duty, by this *politick Scare-Crow*. I am as much for observing all the just and reasonable Rules of Conversation, as others.



others. This is the first Time that any have laid the Breach of them to me, and with how little Reason, the impartial *Reader* may judge.

But this Objection I have met with artfully turned, and altered another way, to render it the more plausible, thus: That Mr. *Read* had always a great Respect and Friendship for Mr. Reynolds, and had often stood up for him and vindicated him, that having a Conference with him, he thought he might be free, and under Secrecy by the Bonds of Friendship; but it was at the End of the Conference he told him, that what he did was, upon the Advice of the Gentlemen, and then proposed the minuting down what was said on one side and t'other. I will allow, that before what happened in relation to Mr. *Hawkins*, he might act the Part of a Friend. He had no Reason to do otherwise: I will presume to say, that on my part I was not behind hand with him; (as he must know I am able to evince) though on the opening of that Affair I observed a visible Alteration in his Conduct, which gave me no small Concern and Grief. Of this I have flagrant Proofs, however, shall say no more at present, than what himself and Party have made necessary for my own Defence.

But the Stress of this Objection lies upon my not telling him, till the End of the Conference, that what I did was by Advice of the Gentlemen. Suppose I had told him, what then? Why then it would have put him more

upon his Guard, he had not been so *free* and *open*. That is, he would have *concealed* his Sentiments. And how would he have done *that*? It must have been either by a *direct refusing* to let me know them, or by an *artful hiding* them: How could he fairly do the *first*? I must have told him the Circumstances of the Congregation made the Knowledge of them necessary, and I came in *the Gentlemen's Name* as well as my own: And I am well satisfied his *refusing*, would by no Means have been for his Advantage. Shall we suppose, he might have deceived me by *Art and Cunning*? Where then would have been the Sincerity, that is to be expected from every *honest Man*, and especially a Minister? Putting it thus: The concealing of his Sentiments by a downright *Refusal*, would have lost his Interest in the Church, or if he had *deceived* me, he must have wronged his Conscience.

But allowing it to be true, that *I did not tell him at first*: How stands the Objection now? Why being *ignorant of it*, he thought he might be free and under Secrecy by the Bonds of Friendship. If he shall say he was ignorant of it, I cannot believe him, for the Reason already given, and the Friend that informed him of all that passed, was one of those very *Gentlemen* that gave me the Advice. If he shall say, *he thought he might be free with me*. I aver it again, as I have already, that it is *false*, he was far from using *Freedom*. He knows I was forced to press and urge him to  
tell

tell me his Sentiments. If he shall say (or any for him) that upon telling me his Sentiments, *he thought he might be under Secrecy by the Bonds of Friendship*. Besides the Declaration I have made before, of my being under no promisory Engagement, I farther answer, that I take no Bonds of Friendship to be *absolute*, but to receive their Measure from the *supreme Law*. I confess my self bound to be strict to all such Promises as are consistent with that, nay, in *Things lawful*, I am obliged without the Tye of a Promise, to reveal nothing, that I think would be prejudicial to my Friend. But *no Bonds* of Friendship can oblige me to be *false* to God, *unfaithful* to my Trust, or *inhuman* to my self; all which I think I should have been by *keeping secret* what Mr. *Read* or others do wish I had: Upon the whole, as to the Circumstance of Time, whether I acquainted him with the *Gentlemens Advice* at the *Beginning* or *End* of the Conference or not: After what I have said, I leave it to Mr. *Read* and his *Friends* to chuse which they will, because not having this particular Circumstance down in my Minutes, I cannot at this Distance of Time be positive in asserting any Thing, except in the general, that the mentioning of it *first* or *last* was indifferent; and which way soever it was, I do not see how he can *fairly* turn it to any Thing that shall answer his Purpose.

What

What concludes this Objection is, that *I did not propose minuting down what was said on one side and t'other till at last.* If this be Matter of Charge, I own, that both the *Proposals of Peace*, and *minuting what had passed*, were mentioned in the *Close* of the Conference. And in reply to this, I say, that *then* was the only proper Time for both. The mentioning either of these, before any Difference appeared, had been needless and absurd, and I should have incurred the Charge of that so much abhorred Evil, JEALOUSY. Besides, the *Gentlemens Advice* went no farther than in general to impart the Letters, and know Mr. *Read's* Thoughts upon them. As to Circumstances, they were at my own Discretion to act as I saw fit: And as to minuting with respect to the Conference, there was no Harm, I think, in the *Motion*; when I offer'd it, he made no Complaint. As yet, I had minuted nothing my self, and he was in the same Condition of Liberty to do it or not, as he saw fit. But suppose I had taken Minutes by my self without acquainting *him*, what have any to say to that? This was a Prudential intirely in my own Breast and Power; but I was unwilling to trust my Memory, or run any Hazard of wronging him or my self. As to my *Proposals*, it had been well had he hearkned to them, and come and conferred with me again as I desired. Any that read them must judge that if he had been inclined to Peace, or had not differed greatly



greatly from me in Judgment, he would have readily embraced the Offer. I fear he had *ill Advisers*, who puffed him up with imaginary Hopes, in which he was disappointed; and for which he must blame himself, not me, who studied to preserve him, and had no Design of parting with him till *he* himself made it *necessary*.

But what Mr. *Browne* has endeavoured to fix upon me, is still more heinous than any Thing yet given out; and, being published by him, a *Brother Minister*, with his Name at large, it must without doubt have excited the Attention of many. I shall now consider so much as concerns the Passage I at first cited, and make my Remarks upon it.

*A Zealot may lay Snares for a Brother in Conversation.* His Design by this and all that follows, is to *insinuate* that thus I did by Mr. *Read*. He has chosen this *oblique* Way of charging me, perhaps for this Reason, That if I should be able to make it out to be *vile Slander*, he might have this Evasion, *viz.* That he put a Case only in general, and made no such *Application* as I have done. All Mankind will easily see through this *Artifice*, and not think I wrong him by taking it to my self. 'Tis plain from the Connexion and Scope of the whole Paragraph, that his Aim is at me. What other Reason could he have for publishing such a Story? I say then, that to insinuate such a Charge against me in the *Lump*, without shewing what those *Snares* were,

were, or producing the least Instance in Proof of it, is, in a Person of his *Profession* and *Knowledge*, one of the highest Acts of *Injustice*, and the more *scandalous*, by how much the more there appears of *Art* in the Imputation. *Si accusasse sufficiat, &c.* If barely to accuse a Man, be *sufficient*, who will be innocent?

My Conversation with Mr. *Read* on this Occasion was no Contrivance of mine, but upon the Motion and Advice of the Gentlemen. I used no deceitful Tricks to draw him into it. In conferring with him I was plain and above board, more frank and open than I *needed* to have been. In my Report to the Gentlemen I desired he would be present, and said no more than what he confirmed himself; and afterwards left the Gentlemen to lead the Way, and take such Measures as were agreeable to their own Judgment. If this be *laying Snares in Conversation* (for I know no other) if this be reckoned to me as a Reproach, I shall contentedly bear it, and think my self not out of my Duty in *despising the Shame of it*.

He says of the *Zealot* that *he may undermine his [ Brother's ] Interest with his Hearers*. This, tho' put like the other as a possible Thing, he would have believed to be *Fact*. But as a *Christian* and *Minister*, he should either have charged it home and produced his Evidence, or not have spoke one *Word* of it. The bare supposing, or putting

it upon me by *Insinuation* without Proof is against all the Rules of Christian Charity, and highly criminal in GOD's Account, and would be so reckoned in any Case on the other Side. I have shewn all the Steps I took, and am willing the World should judge of them.

He says again of this *Zealot*, That till he has ripened his Design, he may profess great Respect and Esteem, and no Manner of Intention to do him Harm. What was my Design? Why, according to Mr. Browne, it was to get him ejected. This is false. I can say it in Truth, that till he discovered himself, (in the Manner I did not expect) it was so my Aim, Study and Endeavour to defend myself against the *Malecontent Party*, as at the same Time to preserve him for my *Assistant*; and that too, in the free Enjoyment of his Judgment as to the Point of *subscribing*. Was this an undermining of his Interest? Was a constant uniform Profession of Respect and doing nothing contrary to that Profession, an undermining it? Had I any Intention to do him Harm, when it was my Care to preserve him? No, the Harm was done by himself, and he undermined his own Interest, and cast himself out of the Affections of my People at once, by siding with those, who were undermining me; and by holding Opinions, which would by no Means take with an honest People, that I thank GOD were found

to have too much Sense not to discern the Consequences of them.

It is farther said of this *Zealot*, That *when he has artfully wrought up the People to his Purpose he may get him* [his Brother] *ejected at once.* Every one understands this of Mr. Read, and it has by the *adverse Party* been every where cry'd out upon as an *egregious Instance* of Persecution. I have given an Account of all the Steps I took in this Business, and from thence the *Reader* may judge of my Art in working up the People to my Purpose. I left every one to his own Inclination and Judgment. This Matter was first moved by the Gentlemen themselves, tho' when they had declared their own Sense, I heartily concurred with them. If these be *artful Methods*, I desire to be *skilled* in them, for I am sure they are honest. Besides he was not ejected at once, but with more Formality than, he knows a Friend of his was, some Time before. He had a fair Hearing before the principal Members of the Church, several of whom are Men of Education, Judgment and Estates, as well as established Characters. Nor was I satisfied with this, without knowing the Sense of the whole Church. The Charge of *Persecution* I shall refer to the last Objection. Therefore

To go on, This *Zealot* may get his Brother ejected, and after all wipe his own Mouth, and throw all the Blame on the People. In the Account above given, I have all along shewn,



shewn, that what I did was with Advice of the People; and I declared the same sometimes in *Conversation*: but with no Design of casting an *Odium* upon them, only in *Opposition* to the Charge of *Domination* and *spiritual Tyranny*, which has been frequently laid against me, and Mr. *Browne* has sufficiently insinuated up and down in his Pamphlet. Did I ever *deny*, that in parting with Mr. *Read*, they had my *Judgment* and *Consent*? Or did I throw his *Ejection* upon them as Matter of *Blame*? No, we were of *one Mind* in this Affair. If there be any *Blame*, we are *equal* Sharers in it, tho' we see no Cause of *Blame*, and are *fully satisfied* in what we have done. If Mr. *Browne*, after his *scandalous* Representation of Mr. *Read's Dismission*, thought by this Suggestion of *my laying all the Blame on the People*, to beget thereby a *Disgust* in them against me, I am persuaded they know me better than to be caught with this *Bait*, and that no one is like to suffer by it, except the *Author* of this vile Attempt.

To make an End of this *infamous* Passage in his Letter. In order to set this forth as a *finished Piece* of Iniquity, he would have it pass upon the World, That I laid I know not what Snares for a *Brother*, and practised Hypocrisy, Injustice, Knavery (some of the worst Sins) under a *Covert of Zeal for the Faith*, thinking that my *Orthodoxy* will atone for these *Immoralities*, and cover a *Multitude*

*of such Sins.* Does he in his Conscience believe that I did all these *ill Things* under the *Impulse of an imaginary Zeal for God*? (as he speaks in his Postscript) If he does, O where is the Practice of that Charity, which he recommends, and is so strongly demanded from others! Does he think me so ignorant in Religion, as not to know that I must *strive lawfully*? That whatever my *Zeal for God* be I *must not do Evil that Good may come of it*? And that godly Zeal can never consist with a Train of *deliberate, premeditated, known, and wilful Villany* (as must be in this Case) much less *atone* for them? But a good Man, says he, *may do some ill Things in an Hour of Temptation*; vid. P.S. And what was my Temptation? Why upon breaking with Mr. *Read* I should (as it was given out) lose *Half my Church*, and I knew I should make my self *many Enemies*, and draw upon me a *World of Censure*, expose my self to a *deal of Trouble*, and in Case I should be destitute of an *Assistant*, I either *knew* not the Person, that would suit the People and me in our Circumstances, or that there was any Likelyhood of obtaining him. If my own *Ease, Reputation or Interest* would have swayed me, I should not at that Time have broke with Mr. *Read*. But I cannot sufficiently acknowledge the Goodness of God, who in an *Hour of Temptation* was pleased to preserve me from the *Power* of it, and enabled me by his *Grace* to *trust* in him  
and

and prefer the *Peace* of my Conscience in a faithful discharge of Duty, to all other Regards whatsoever.

I come now to the last Thing I take to be of any Moment, and this is the Clamour, that has been made of Mr. *Read's* Dismission, as an *egregious Instance of Persecution*. But whoever shall duly consider this Fact in its *Causes*, can never in *Reason* or *Justice* fix such an odious Brand upon it. Should our People be told, that after they had chosen a Person, whether *Pastor* or *Assistant*, they must not dismiss either of them for the Sake of his *Opinions*, (though on the maturest Consideration they should find them *no Way consistent* with the Peace and Edification of the Church) or if they did, they would incur the Guilt of the *heinous Sin* of Persecution: I am persuaded they would account it a *Banter* on their Understanding, and (as a Proof how much they were convinced by it) would be ready to return the Compliment, as is done in *Holland*, with a *Staff and Pair of Shoes*. The Generality, I hope, do see too far into the Consequences of such a *Position*, and have too great a Sense of the *Liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free*, to be imposed upon or deluded by so gross and ridiculous an *Absurdity*. What some may *talk* to serve a particular Design upon others in their own Favour, I shall not say, but no *Dissenters*, that act upon *Protestant Principles*, will ever *practise* it in their

*own Case.* And to conclude, I see no Reason for this Complaint of Persecution, as long as Mr. *Read* is *no way* hindred, but has *free Liberty* to exercise his Ministry, among any such as do like and approve of him.

But some have said, *I should not have turned him off so hastily, but taken Time to convince him of his Mistake, and called in others to assist me.* They that make this Objection, I am persuaded do not fully understand, or rightly consider, the Circumstances of the Case. Had he been in a *private Capacity*, and the only Person I had Concern with, it would have given some Colour to this Objection. But it being at a Time when there was a *Confederacy* and *Cabals* actually formed against me, it must greatly alter the Case: But he had Time, and sufficient Time given him; and I offered to confer with him, but he did not come: And had I called in others, it is not to be supposed he would have left them wholly to *my Choice*, but would have insisted upon having such present, as I knew were then in Difference with us, and whom it is likely he consulted in all his Measures. This, and the Circumstances we were then in, would in all Probability have *increased* the Flame, and created *new ones*. It must necessarily have spun out a great deal of Time, and the Condition of the Church was such, as called for the *speediest* Remedy possible. Therefore I have no Reflections that trouble me on this Head (nor I thank God on any other) because I know



know I did as much as in Prudence I could, and the Case it self would admit.

Thus I have gone into this Affair, as far as my parting with Mr. *Read*, having given a *faithful Narrative* of Facts, in the Order they occurred, and answered the slanderous Reports, and most *material* Objections I have met with. In all which, God knows, I have acted in his Fear, to whom I am accountable. As to what passed between Mr. *Read* and me alone, He is my Witness, I have not wronged him in any Thing, but have kept back a great deal of the Conversation between us, by which I could enflame the Account: And as to all other Matters of Fact relating to him, I think I am able to support them with invincible Evidence: So that I may be bold to say, and I say it once for all, that if any Thing shall be offered to invalidate what I have here published, it must be only in Shew, by making *new Complaints*, and vamping up *fresh Stories*, foreign to the Point in Hand (as I have heard of one, which if ever they produce, I am capable of answering, not to their Advantage) or else if it be *inconsistent* with, or *contrary* to this Account, it will be *downright Falshood*, or mere *Collusion* and *Artifice*.

I now leave it to every Man of Sense and Equity, to judge between Mr. *Browne* and me, whether I have deserved the *wretched Character* he has given of me? And whether he hath used the proper Means to be *well* and *truly* informed, (having never spoke, or wrote to me  
one

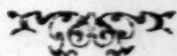
one Word about this whole Matter) Or has treated me, as one Man should do another, and especially a Minister his elder Brother?

I cannot but complain of it as a great Hardship, to be censured and exposed, not only in private Conversation, but from the *Pulpit*, and now in *Print*, without having any of my *Brethren*, that have thus *exclaimed* against me, so much as *once* to come and desire an amicable Conference with me, to know what I or my People had to say in our Defence. Did these Brethren make my Case their own, I am sure they would think as I do, and the Time may come, when they may remember the Affliction of *Joseph*, and the Anguish of his Soul. How strongly might I here expostulate with them, and even upbraid them! But I leave it to God and their own Consciences, to plead my Cause with them.

But before I dismiss this Affair, I must acknowledge there is one Passage in Mr. *Browne's* Postscript, that has surprised me as much as any Thing. This is, that as he hath thought me *very culpable*, so others my old and true Friends, have been of the same Opinion: And could the good Advice of such have corrected my Conduct, I had never heard from him; nor he believes any other, in this way. If he had done me Justice, he should have given me a Hint by which I might know, who these Friends are, whether *Laymen* or *Ministers*, and what was the Advice they gave; that I and the World might judge of it,  
and

and then I should have known what Reply to make. This is so dark an *Apology*, that till he acquaints me of the *Persons* and *what they said*, I must tell him; it is under a shew of saying something, in *reality* to say nothing at all. I hope he does not mean Mr. *Hawkins* and his *Party*, if he does, it is all *Jest*. Be this as it will, I say, that since Mr. *Read's Dismission*, I know of none, that ever came to advise me in my *Conduct*, till Mr. *Browne's* Letter was published. And as to this, I have never been backward to receive Light from fit and prudent Persons; yet after all, I am not *absolutely to resign my Judgment to any Man*, but follow the Dictates of my own Conscience. As to the Reasons of my *present Conduct*, I have given them in my *Introduction* to this Account.

Whether what I have said about this Concern of Mr. *Read*, shall be judged satisfactory, and sufficient to remove the *Prepossessions* and *Prejudices* of some People, I know not; but whatever shall be the *Censures* I may yet fall under, I hope I shall continue peaceably and patiently to *commit my Cause to him that judgeth righteously*.



## SECTION V.

*Containing an Account of what passed  
in relation to the Reverend Mr.  
Evans and his People.*



Aving said so much of this Affair relating to Mr. *Read*, I shall go on to the Conclusion of it. No sooner was he discharged from us, than he was invired to Mr. *Evans's* Pulpit, and proposed for his *Assistent*. I shall make no Descants on this particular Management, only hope I may without Offence, acknowledge my Obligations to those to whom they are *due*, for insisting first upon an Inquiry into the *Reasons* of his *Dismission* from us, as what they thought a Piece of Justice owing to our Church, and necessary in order to direct their own Choice. My Sicknes hindred this, till my Return from the Countrey to LONDON, when Mr. *Evans* attended me, with some of his People deputed from the Church, and desired an Answer to the following Questions.

*Whether Mr. Read be entirely dismissed from any farther Engagements to Mr. Reynolds's Congregation?*

*Whether, if he is dismissed, it is for any  
false*



false Doctrine or Irregularity of Life charged upon him?

These occasioned the following Letter to the Reverend Mr. *Evans*.

Novemb. 17, 1720.

Reverend SIR,

“ Since you gave your self the Trouble of  
 “ calling at my House, with some  
 “ Gentlemen of your Congregation, in the  
 “ Name of the Rest, I have communicated  
 “ the Questions you then proposed, to the  
 “ Gentlemen Managers, and other principal  
 “ Members of our Church: And it has been  
 “ unanimously agreed to return the following  
 “ Answer.

“ To the FIRST, *Whether Mr. Read be in-*  
 “ *tirely dismissed from any farther Engage-*  
 “ *ments to Mr. Reynolds's Congregation?*  
 “ He is intirely dismissed.

“ To the SECOND, *Whether if dismissed,*  
 “ *it is for any false Doctrine, or Irregularity*  
 “ *of Life charged upon him?*

“ To the later Branch of this Question  
 “ we first Answer: That his Dismission was  
 “ for no Irregularity of Life charged upon him.  
 “ Yet we take this Occasion to express our  
 “ Grief at the *unfair Representations* and  
 “ *false Accounts*, that have been given of  
 K 2 “ Things

“ Things in relation to our parting with  
 “ him.

“ To the *other Branch* we Answer: That  
 “ the true and only Ground upon which our  
 “ Church parted with Mr. *Read*, was his dis-  
 “ agreeing to the following Questions, which  
 “ the *Circumstances* of our Case made neces-  
 “ sary to be put to him.

“ *Whether a Person that pays religious*  
 “ *Worship to CHRIST, but at the same Time*  
 “ *disowns him to be truly and properly God,*  
 “ (that is, in the strictest and strongest Sense of  
 “ the Word) *be chargeable with down-right*  
 “ *Idolatry? And,*

“ *Whether such a One has forfeited his*  
 “ *Claim to Christian Communion?*

“ For our own Parts, we cannot, but with  
 “ all the *Reformed* hitherto, and as we think  
 “ agreeably to the Scriptures, declare our  
 “ selves to be in the *Affirmative* of these  
 “ Questions; but Mr. *Read*, though he had  
 “ about a Fortnight's Time to consider and  
 “ consult his Friends upon them, yet when  
 “ the same were put to him, he did upon a  
 “ *fair Hearing*, before a considerable Num-  
 “ ber of the *principal Members* of the  
 “ Church, declare in *express Terms*, That *he*  
 “ *could not be with us in the Affirmative*; that  
 “ is, he could not *affirm* that a Man who  
 “ worships Christ, although at the same Time  
 “ he disowns him to be truly and properly  
 “ God (in the strictest and strongest Sense of  
 “ the Word,) is an *Idolater*: Nor could he  
 “ *affirm,*

“ *affirm*, that such a One ought to be debarred  
 “ Christian Communion on that Account.  
 “ Whether he or we be in the right, or  
 “ which of us be in an Error, we leave to o-  
 “ thers to make their own Judgment.

“ Mr. *Read* differing from us in these  
 “ Points, which we apprehend do greatly af-  
 “ fect the *Doctrine, Worship, and Discipline*  
 “ of our own, and all the reformed Churches,  
 “ we cannot see how he and Mr *Reynolds*  
 “ could discharge the Office of the Ministry  
 “ with that *Unanimity* and mutual *Assistance*,  
 “ as was *necessary* to our common Peace and  
 “ Edification, especially considering the di-  
 “ sturbed and unsettled Circumstances we  
 “ were then in. Wherefore without any pre-  
 “ vious going about to *procure Votes* (as hath  
 “ been given out) it was declared : *First*, by  
 “ a considerable Number of the principal  
 “ Members of the Congregation, and after-  
 “ wards at a *general Meeting*, (except *five*  
 “ or *six* who dissented) that it was their Opi-  
 “ nion Mr. *Reynolds* should part with Mr.  
 “ *Read*, and be desired to do it as speedily,  
 “ and in as friendly a Manner as could be ;  
 “ which was accordingly done.

“ Thus, Sir, you have a true Account of the  
 “ Grounds and Reasons of our parting with  
 “ Mr. *Read*. I give it you as not knowing  
 “ how far you and your People may need to  
 “ be informed ; and am desired to do it, not  
 “ only in my own, but likewise in the Name  
 “ of the Gentlemen, that manage the Affairs  
 “ of

“ of the Congregation, and of others with  
 “ them, whose Testimony, with respect to the  
 “ foregoing Matters of Fact, we hope will be  
 “ sufficient.

“ I have no more, than to assure you for  
 “ my self, that my parting with Mr. *Read*  
 “ was not from any *personal Pique*. And  
 “ any one may easily judge, that the Incon-  
 “ veniencies, Cares, and Censures from some,  
 “ though undeserved, that were likely to fol-  
 “ low hereupon, could by no Means make it  
 “ the Matter of my *Choice*. I had a great  
 “ deal of Comfort in him as a Collegue, for  
 “ a considerable Number of Years, and  
 “ should have been glad to have had it con-  
 “ tinued. Nothing but the Constraints of my  
 “ Mind and Conscience, could oblige me to  
 “ do what I have done; and herein I have  
 “ only acted according to the Liberty univer-  
 “ sally allowed. And if the Account here  
 “ given, or any Thing else from me, has or  
 “ shall, in any Respect, prove to his Disad-  
 “ vantage, it is purely accidental on my Part.  
 “ The Cause must be imputed to himself: I  
 “ only wish he may alter his Mind, which  
 “ would be a great Satisfaction, not to me  
 “ only, but to many others, both of his  
 “ Friends and Brethren. I should never have  
 “ troubled you with this Account, had I not  
 “ thought that your own, and your People's  
 “ *Desires*, had laid me under an *Obligation*  
 “ to it. I conclude with my hearty Prayers,  
 “ that the Truth of the Gospel may continue  
 “ with



“ with you, and the Fruits of it abound  
 “ more and more, being to you and your  
 “ People a sincere Well-wisher; and,

*Your, and their,*

*very respectful,*

*and humble Servant,*

THO. REYNOLDS.

Since this Letter it has been reported, that I had acquitted Mr. *Read* of the Charge of *Error*, as well as Irregularity of Life, and to confirm it the more, it has been said with great Assurance, that it was to be seen under my own Hand. How far I have given Ground for this Story by the foregoing Letter, I leave any to judge. Besides this, I sincerely know of nothing I ever wrote, that could give the least Occasion to it. If they can produce any Thing, I much desire to see it, and promise them I will not deny my Hand. The End of publishing such a Story as this, was no doubt to persuade People, that the Concern I had in dismissing Mr. *Read*, not being on Account of Irregularity of Life, nor of false Doctrine, it must be from nothing but *Grudge* and *Spite*, which must render me exceeding odious to all that believe it. But there being no Truth in it, what must I think of those Persons, that have gone about deceiving honest People, by such contrived Falsities. Indeed I have all along declared, that he was not dismissed for *Arianism*; but will any be so *absurd* as to infer from hence, that there-

therefore it was not for *Error*? Certainly there are Errors, and those very dangerous ones too, tho' they may not be the *peculiar* and distinguishing *Tenets* of *Arius*.

*November 29, 1720.* I had a nameless Paper put into my Hand, by one of my People, which he told me was written by Mr. *Read*, and I had heard it was in Answer to my Letter above, and was handed about among Mr. *Evans's* People: Upon which I sent the following Letter to Mr. *Evans*.

*Rood-Lane, Dec. 1, 1720.*

*Reverend SIR,*

“ I Have a Paper put into my Hand, which  
 “ I am informed is an Answer given by Mr.  
 “ *Read*, to the Letter I lately sent you in my  
 “ own and Peoples Name. There is men-  
 “ tion in it of some *Facts*, that cannot be  
 “ allowed by me and my People, and such as  
 “ the *Stress* of the Answer lies upon. But  
 “ that I may be truly informed, I send this, to  
 “ pray you will please to favour me with an  
 “ *authentick Copy*, that I may peruse it, and  
 “ have the Opportunity, if need be, )to  
 “ rectify Mistakes, and give an Answer. This  
 “ I do not with design to interrupt your Pro-  
 “ ceedings, but to do Justice to you and your  
 “ People, as well as my own, and to prevent  
 “ the Inconveniences, that for want of this  
 “ may follow. I am, SIR,

*Your very respectful Brother, and Servant,*

THO. REYNOLDS,

This

This Letter I sent by my *Clark's* Son, who had from Mr. *Evans* himself this Answer, " That he was not then very well, but would " send me a Copy the next Day." However I did not receive one till above a Fortnight after. And tho' his Disorder had disabled him from Writing himself, he might have done me this Favour, as much to my Satisfaction, by the Hand of another. This Copy was attended with the following Letter from himself.

*Reverend* SIR,

" I Have sent you an intire Copy of that  
" Paper of Mr. *Read*, which I suppose  
" you mean, transcribed from his own. You  
" may think it long e'er I send it, but you  
" have heard of the Disorder which has lately  
" attended me. I have not wrote six  
" Lines together upon any Occasion since I  
" received your Letter till this which I send  
" to you.

" But I must be so just to you and Mr.  
" *Read* as to tell you, that it was not intended  
" as his Answer ( as you express it )  
" to your Letter, but only as an Answer to  
" a particular Question I put to him upon Occasion  
" of your Letter, *viz.* Whether he  
" had particularly asserted the Negative of  
" your Questions, which I had heard he had  
" not done, but which I thought you to intimate,  
" tho' you do not directly affirm it. I

L

" suppose,

“ suppose, if your Questions had been expressed without those Phrases which he thought  
“ not so easily intelligible, yet he would have  
“ been shy of positively declaring all those  
“ mistaken Men, who worship Christ, tho’  
“ they believe him not in every Respect equal to the Father, to be guilty of downright Idolatry; and especially of submitting  
“ to such a Declaration concerning other People as a Test of his Ministry. I am,

*Reverend Sir,*

Prescot-Street,  
Dec. 17, 1720.

*Your affectionate Brother*

*and Servant,*

JOHN EVANS.

P. S. I have sent you herewith a List for half a Year to come of our usual Courses for Fasts and Preparations. I would be glad to know before Lord's Day sevensnight, whether you and Mr. Robinson design a Continuance of them, that I may be able to give Notice. My Reason is, because I understand neither Mr. Robinson nor you gave Notice of our last Preparation, tho' it was included in the last List, and I was obliged to make Provision my self for it.

*Copy*



*Copy of Mr. READ'S Paper.*

“ **T**HE Questions sent to me by Mr. *Reynolds* in Writing greatly differ from those he was pleased to propose to me in a private Conversation with him, to be considered by me.

“ After I had received them as they now stand in Writing, I set my self seriously to enquire into the Meaning of them, in Order to my giving Mr. *Reynolds* an Answer; but after all my Thoughts, not being able to understand them, and receiving no Satisfaction either from Mr. *Reynolds* or the Gentlemen in the Conference, the only Conference I had with them; when urged to give an Answer, I said, I could not answer in the Affirmative.

“ Mr. *Reynolds* had been pleased to declare, that he held the Affirmative. Not understanding the Questions, I could not answer in the Affirmative; if I had, I must have affirmed, I knew not what, concerning I knew not whom; which I then thought, and still think, a Compliance too mean, whatever Advantage to me might have followed upon it.

“ Every reasonable Person will grant, that whenever a Question is proposed, it should first be understood before an Answer be

“ given to it: If a Question happen to be ex-  
 “ preſt ſo as not to be underſtood by one  
 “ from whom an Answer is expected, the  
 “ declining to give an Answer may have  
 “ its Inconveniencies, but no Fault attend-  
 “ ing it.

The above Letter, with this Copy of Mr.  
*Read's* Paper, was brought me *Saturday* Af-  
 ternoon, when buſy in my Preparations for  
 the Morrow. I had learned he was out that  
 Week, which made me think he might have  
 favoured me with an Answer ſooner. His  
 ſending it at ſuch a Time, when I could not  
 well have an Opportunity to return an An-  
 ſwer that Evening, made me for ſome Rea-  
 ſons conjecture, that ſomething was next Day  
 to be done in his Church; nor was I wrong  
 in my Gueſſes. Wherefore I ſent him the  
 following Letter, which was delivered to him  
 before the Church Meeting, of which he had  
 given Notice from the Pulpit. He read, as  
 my Servant informed me, a few Lines at the  
 Bottom of my Letter, then put it in his  
 Pocket, ſaying, he was ill, but if it needed  
 an Answer he would ſend one.

*My Answer to Mr. EVANS's Letter.*

Rood-Lane, Dec. 18, 1720.

Reverend SIR,

“ I Am glad you are recovered from your  
 “ late Disorder, may it be a Ground of  
 “ many Thanksgivings to GOD. This comes  
 “ with my Thanks for the Copy you *at last*  
 “ sent me of Mr. *Read's* Paper Yesterday  
 “ Afternoon, but I am sorry to find *several*  
 “ *Facts* mentioned or implied in it, which  
 “ we are bound to disclaim; and that *the*  
 “ *whole Representation* is so unfair and inju-  
 “ rious, that in necessary Self-defence, we must  
 “ desire and *insist* upon it, you will read this  
 “ my Letter to your People, and let them  
 “ know we cannot allow that Paper to be  
 “ just.

“ What you offer in his Favour, upon  
 “ some *Phrases* in the Questions, which he  
 “ thought not so *easily intelligible*, might have  
 “ had some Force, if upon his Desire I had  
 “ not *explained* my self; but there was not  
 “ the *least Intimation* of their Obscurity du-  
 “ ring the whole Time they were under his  
 “ Consideration.

“ I see no Reason why he should be *shy*  
 “ of declaring those guilty of *Idolatry*, who  
 “ worship Christ, *tho' they deny him to be*  
 “ *truly and properly* GOD, (so I *expressed it*  
 “ in the Question) or deny him to be e-  
 “ qual, and in all *essential Respects* the same  
 “ in

“ in his *divine* Nature with the Father, which  
 “ is what I mean by the *strictest and strong-*  
 “ *est Sense* of the Word God. I believe  
 “ there are few Instances of Protestants till  
 “ of late Years, that have refused to declare  
 “ this of *Arians, Socinians*, or any others,  
 “ that have denied Christ's GODHEAD, but  
 “ on the contrary, have upon this Account  
 “ renounced Communion with them, *about*  
 “ *the Claim to which*, you are pleased to  
 “ say *nothing*.

“ I think People have a Right to desire  
 “ in a *civil Manner*, the Declaration of their  
 “ Ministers concerning Matters of Moment.  
 “ The calling this a *TEST of their Ministry*,  
 “ is to put a Term grown odious upon that,  
 “ which in my Opinion is the most *reason-*  
 “ *able Demand* in the World : And if one, that  
 “ stands only in Relation of an *Assistant*,  
 “ shall refuse to comply, and the People fore-  
 “ seeing the Consequences of it, shall advise  
 “ and desire a *friendly Parting*, I know  
 “ not what should forbid it, or why such a  
 “ Pastor and People should be loaded with  
 “ Reproach and Calumny only for endea-  
 “ vouring to preserve their own Peace and  
 “ Comfort, whilst they pretend not to hinder  
 “ others that like him, from enjoying his La-  
 “ bours. I am,

*Your affectionate Brother and Servant,*

THO. REYNOLDS.



P. S. *The Information of my not giving Notice of last Month's Preparation was wrong. I shall speak to Mr. Robinson when I see him.*

Accordingly the first Opportunity I had with Mr. Robinson, I imparted to him the Postscript of Mr. Evans's Letter, and in Return to his Question, *Whether we designed a Continuance of our [quarterly] Fasts and [monthly] Preparations*; we sent these few Lines.

Reverend Sir,

Y Our late Proceedings make it necessary, that we consider farther about joining in our preparatory Exercises as usual. We judge it proper therefore to alter our Method at this Time, and shall excuse you from giving your Assistance on Friday next. We are

*Your faithful Brethren*

December  
24, 1720.

*and Servants,*

B. ROBINSON.  
THO. REYNOLDS.

Mr. Evans hereupon, without giving us any previous Notice of his Intentions, went and joined with others.

And

And now to make good the Complaints I sent him of Mr. *Read's* Paper, as containing an unjust Representation of the Matter between him and me, I shall mention some Things that are false in Fact.

Many would imagine that in private Conversation I had proposed to him *some Questions* in an agreed Form of Words, and afterwards sent him others *greatly differing* from them. If his Design was to intimate this, it is false in Fact. We talked of several Things, which would not be for his Advantage, should I be forced to give an Account of them. What we discoursed of in relation to Mr. *Hawkins's* Letters, did rest upon those two Points I sent him by way of Question. And there is no considering Man, but will be inclined to believe, that if we differed in any Thing about the Answer I gave to Mr. *Hawkins's* first Letter, it was concerning these Points. I solemnly affirm, that when I asked him, what he thought of them that worship Christ, tho' they deny him to be God, whether they were guilty of *Idolatry*? He gave me, after I urged him to know his particular Sentiment, this odd Answer, *That he did not think it the Idolatry that was charged in Scripture on the Heathens.* This was shifting the Question, mine being, whether it was in general chargeable with *Idolatry*? And when I asked him his Opinion, concerning the Right which such have to Christian Communion? He said, he had not thought so much of that Matter, and that it would

would require Time to determine it. Upon that I desired him to think of what we had thus discoursed upon, and appointed a Day for another Conference; but he never came.

Again, upon these Expressions, [*not being able to understand, and receiving no Satisfaction either from Mr. Reynolds or the Gentlemen*] any Body will think that he applied to us to explain the Meaning of the Questions. But all the *Gentlemen*, as well as myself, know he did not. He had those Questions by him in Writing a *Fortnight*, and had Time and Opportunity sufficient to know my Meaning, either by Letter or Word of Mouth, but he never pretended to me, or the *Gentlemen*, that he did not understand them. This is an Excuse contrived on purpose to give a Colour to his Cause among his Friends; but instead of mending the Matter, in Reality it makes it a great deal worse. Two Persons, his very particular Friends, came to me after his Dismissal, and in a long Conference they had with me, when ill in Bed, (of which I shall say no more at present than what relates to this Fact) one of them desired to know, if he did not ask me, what I meant by the Term God? what by the *strictest* and *strongest Sense*? what by *religious Worship*? and what by *Idolatry*? At which I was surprized, and peremptorily answered them, *No*, he put no such Questions to me. For my own Part, I had no other Thought,

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than

than that he understood the Questions, nor I believe had the Gentlemen, for there was not *the least Discovery* made by him to the contrary. If he says otherwise, I pray he will please to let us know the Answers, which I or any of the Gentlemen gave to his *Queries*, which were not to his Satisfaction; for I hear he has taken Minutes of Matters, as well as my self.

As to the last Clause of this Paper, I do not see how he can possibly clear himself of *Fault*, seeing he ran himself and others into great Inconveniences, disturbed the Peace of the Congregation, and gave Occasion of Scandal upon so frivolous a Pretence, as that of *not understanding the Questions*; of which, if he had given me the least Hint, I should have readily explained my Mind to him.

And that he may have *no Plea* of this Nature for the future, I shall now say something to the Questions themselves. I am satisfied Mr. *Read* could not be ignorant of my Sense in Relation to the GODHEAD of Christ, as I am able to convince him from the Conversation I had with him a little before his Ordination, in which he desired me to bear a Part. But if he or any else do stand in need of farther Information, I shall now explain, what I take to be the only Thing in the Questions they can pretend to charge with *Obscurity*, and this is what I mean by the *strictest* and *strongest Sense* of the Word GOD.



In *general*, by the *strongest Sense*, I mean the most emphatical Sense; in short, I take these Words, *strictest, strongest, highest, most emphatical*, in this Case to be synonymous Terms.

But to explain my self a little more particularly, I say, that when I affirm, that Jesus Christ, the second Person in the ever blessed Trinity, is God in the *strictest and strongest Sense*, I mean that he is God by *Nature*, and the *same* in Nature or *Essence* with the *Father*. So that whatever may be conceived or affirmed of the *Nature* of the most High God, the *same* may, and ought to be affirmed of Christ's *Divine Nature*. This I am inclined to think every unprejudiced Person, that is not given to Cavil, will readily conceive to be my Meaning, by those Words, *in the strictest and strongest Sense*, and that I could have no other, I lengthened the Question, by adding the same on purpose to guard against those, that deny Christ to be God, in the Sense I have explained, as the *Socinians, Arians*, and some others do. I shall conclude what I have to say on this Head, after I have informed my Reader, of the Reason which Mr. *Read* has given out, why he could not affirm with me, that Christ is truly God in the *strictest and strongest Sense*, which the late Reverend and Learned Mr. *Lorrimer*, sometime before his Death, left written with his own Hand at my House.

“ Mr. *Read* told me, that the Reason why  
 “ he was not free to own Christ the Son of  
 “ God, to be *truly* God, in the *highest* and  
 “ *strongest* Sense of the Word God, was, be-  
 “ cause the whole Trinity is only God, in that  
 “ highest and strongest Sense. To which I an-  
 “ swered, that I would advise him not to  
 “ stand to that Reason, for it is *contradicti-*  
 “ *ous Nonsense*. For so the *Father* (nor in-  
 “ deed any of the Persons) could not be God  
 “ in the highest and strongest Sense, because  
 “ the *Father* is not, cannot be the *whole*  
 “ *Trinity*. The *Father* is not, cannot, be  
 “ God *Father, Son, and Spirit*. He said, he  
 “ did not give that Reason to the Church, but  
 “ it is certain, he has given that Reason  
 “ abroad, and he gave it to me ; and I advi-  
 “ sed him not to adhere to it, for it is not  
 “ *defensible*.

To this part of the Account, I think it ne-  
 cessary to add, that though I *insisted* in my  
 Letter to Mr. *Evans*, page 85. that it should  
 be read to his Church, having heard that Mr.  
*Read's* Paper, of which I had complained,  
 had been read to them ; yet I was informed,  
 that when this my Desire was notified at one of  
 their Meetings, a Vote was passed against read-  
 ing the same, or any other Paper of mine ;  
 this I thought hard. However, before my  
 publishing of this, I sent a Letter to my Re-  
 vrend Brother, with a Request he would let me  
 know,

know, whether I was right in this Account ; or if not, how it was? He sent me a civil Answer the same Day. I wish Mr. *Browne* would take Example from it. I shall recite so much of it, as affects the present Case.

“ I desired the Congregation to meet on  
 “ *Thursday* 22, [*Dec.* 1720.] in order to  
 “ chuse an *Assistant*. At that Meeting, I  
 “ told them, they had heard your *first Letter*  
 “ and a Paper of Mr. *Read's*, read to them  
 “ formerly ; but that I had received another  
 “ Letter from you the last Lord's Day, which  
 “ I had not Time to peruse before I met them  
 “ last, but had done it since, and would now  
 “ communicate to them ; and the rather, be-  
 “ cause you insisted in it, that it should be  
 “ read to them. As I was beginning to read  
 “ it, a worthy Member of our Society desired  
 “ first to be heard a few Words ; and sug-  
 “ gested, that since you had given a full and  
 “ positive Answer to the Questions, about  
 “ which the Congregation desired to be in-  
 “ formed, in your former Letter, he thought  
 “ there could be no Occasion to hear any  
 “ Thing farther ; and therefore moved, that  
 “ the Sense of the Congregation might be  
 “ known, whether they desired to have any  
 “ more read. This Person never saw or  
 “ heard of your second Letter, before I men-  
 “ tioned it to the Congregation : Nor had  
 “ I the least Apprehension of such a Motion.  
 “ But it being seconded and thirded,  
 “ there

“ there was a Necessity by the Rules of So-  
 “ ciety to have the Question put, Whether it  
 “ should be read or no? And accordingly it  
 “ was carried in the Negative by a great Ma-  
 “ jority. This is the true State of the Case,  
 “ and you are welcome to make what Use you  
 “ please of this Account, from,

SIR,

*Your very respectful Brother,*

Prescot-Street,

Feb. 6, 1727.

*and Servant,*

JOHN EVANS.

I am obliged to my Brother *Evans* for his Civility in sending me this Account, and thank him for the Liberty he has given me, to make what Use I please of it. I then crave leave to say, that it has not altered my Thoughts of that *Vote*, as hard upon me and my People. My first Letter was in Answer to the Desire of his Church, and for *their Satisfaction*. My second of another Nature, complaining of *Injustice* done by Mr. *Read*, and for my own and People's *Vindication*. Provided a fair state of the Case between Mr. *Read* and me had been agreed upon, and known; we could have had no Objection against another People's chusing him for their Assistant or Pastor, how much soever he differs from us in Opinion. They are doubtless at as much Liberty to chuse him, if they see fit,



as we to refuse him. But my Letter was concerning a Matter of *Wrong*, wherein any private Person, much more a Minister and People, have a Title to Regard by the Rule of the Gospel, which is to guide in this Case. And if a People through Precipitancy, or any other Cause, shall divert therefrom, I conceive it to be the Minister's Place, who presides among them, to inform and direct them to act by it. Nor are they in Matters of a *moral Nature*, to be *absolutelty* governed by what is practised and customary in civil Societies, but by the *Laws of Christ*; the Breach of which are not to be excused by any Custom or Rule of *civil Constitution*. When Mr. *Read* was with us, he had a fair Hearing before the Gentlemen of the Church, and was not wronged afterwards in the Account that was given to the Body. But though we complained of his Paper as an unfair Representation, and thought our selves greatly injured by the Account of *Facts*, yet nothing in our Vindication was allowed to be once read, (tho' had that been, we should have given them no farther Trouble) but a Vote passed against it. This I still think to be hard, and no way suitable to the Respect due to a Society of fellow Christians, that had amicably con-sociated with them in monthly Acts of divine Worship, for a long Course of Years.

I shall now shut up the whole History of this Affair, with what passed between me and a Member of Mr. *Evans's* Church, whose Name I shall conceal, being one I have an  
Esteem

Esteem for, as having long born the Character of a sincere Christian, though I think his way of treating me was too harsh and assuming

After the short Letter sent Mr. *Evans*, signed by Mr. *Robinson* and my self, (*vid.* p. 87.) I had the following Letter.

SIR,  
 “YOUR late Letter signed by your self  
 “and Mr. *Robinson*, to Mr. *Evans*, has  
 “filled me with the greatest Concern. As I  
 “am one under Mr. *Evans*’s pastoral Care,  
 “look upon my self obliged to inquire into  
 “the Reason of such a surprizing (and in my  
 “Judgment) rash Step. If it be Heresy in  
 “Doctrine, or Immorality in Practice, it is  
 “fit I should know it for my own Govern-  
 “ment. And I think nothing short of one  
 “of them, can justify such a Procedure. If  
 “you think fit to admit me into your Presence,  
 “in order to my Satisfaction in this Point,  
 “will be thankful. I would hope, as you are  
 “a Minister of the Gospel of Peace, you have  
 “Reasons, for the securing the Peace of your  
 “own Mind on Reflection, or else you have  
 “blemished your own Character, which Rea-  
 “sons I desire you would communicate to me.  
 “I am,

SIR,

Your hearty Friend,

Wednesday,  
 Dec. 28, 1720.

and humble Servant, &c.  
 To

To the best of my Remembrance the Person brought this Letter himself, to whom I came down, and agreed to have a Meeting with him that Afternoon at my Brother *Robinson's*, when I would give some Reasons, why I desired with him to consider farther, about our joining with Mr. *Evans*, in our preparatory Exercises.

I shall only observe upon this Person's Letter, that if nothing short of *Heresy* in Doctrine, or *Immorality* in Practice, can justify a Man in so much as *considering* whether it be fit for him to continue his joining in the Worship of God, with a Minister, or religious Society, with whom upon Occasions, he has formerly so done, I know not how we shall justify our Separation from the Church of ENGLAND. I hope he is not so *uncharitable* as to think all who officiate in the established Church to be *Hereticks*, or *immoral* Men; and yet we think we have Reasons that will justify our Separation, though we had not the least to advance a Charge of this Nature. We believe there are many *sound* and *good* Men in the established Church, and look upon the Church of *England*, as a great Branch of the REFORMATION. My Brother *Robinson* and I did only suspend our Act for that Time. If this Person was filled with such an extreme Concern at this Suspension of ours, should he not have been as much concerned, to have prevail'd with his own Minister to have desired

a Conference? and not join with others, till Measures had been taken to satisfy Mr. *Robinson* and me, when he could not but think we must have some Difficulties and Objections in our Minds, for Reasons he could not be ignorant of.

I met this Gentleman, I think that Afternoon by Agreement at Mr. *Robinson's*, when I gave him some of the Reasons, of that which he judged to be such a *surprising* and *rash Step*. After which I set down the Heads of some of them in a Paper I have by me: They are these.

I. I thought I had just Matter of Complaint against Mr. *Read*, and desired that what I had offered in Vindication of my self and People, might be communicated by Mr. *Evans* to his Church; but so far was I from obtaining this reasonable Request, that neither my Letter, nor any other Paper from me, was allowed to be read, tho' at a preceding Meeting Mr. *Read's* Paper, of which I complained, was admitted to be read.

II. I could not but abide by my own Act and the Peoples in parting with Mr. *Read*, and could not yield (as Circumstances then stood) to Mr. *Read's* joining with us in his present Capacity, which would be a vertual condemning of what we had done in relation to that Matter, at least would be so interpreted.



III. I feared the Consequence of our joining together at a Time, when both the *Pastors* and *People* of the several Congregations were in a Ferment upon the late Proceedings.

IV. The Word of God directs us, to mark those which cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which we have learned, and avoid them, Rom. xvi. 17.

Mr. Robinson has given me his Sense, under his Hand, in the following Words.

*I am of Opinion, that the Method of Proceeding in Mr. Evans's Church, in Relation to Mr. Reynolds and his Church, is what will unavoidably break the Consociation of Churches, not only among Us, but through all the Christian World.*

B. ROBINSON.

After this I received another Letter from the same Person.

Jan. 4, 1720.

SIR,

" I Thank you for the Freedom you lately  
 " allow'd me, have impartially considered,  
 " what was alledged by you, in Justification  
 " of your late Treatment of Mr. Evans, gi-  
 " ving it all the Weight it will admit of, and  
 " must declare, as I did at parting, my Charge  
 " of Injustice to Mr. Evans, and his People,  
 " still remains, As for Mr. Robinson, all he

" said amounted to no more than his Attach-  
" ment to Mr. Reynolds, which, I think, de-  
" serves little Notice. It being thus, I would  
" hope from your Character, you will pub-  
" lickly retract and acknowledge your Mistake.  
" This is surely the *least* that may be expected,  
" and this I do *demand* in Justice to Mr. E-  
" vans and his People, to whom I stand rela-  
" ted. May the great God pour out upon you  
" a Spirit of Love and of a sound Mind. May  
" he prosper your Labours for the promoting  
" of genuine Christianity, ( holy Love to God  
" and Man ) is the sincere Prayer of,

SIR,

*Your real Friend and humble Servant, &c.*

" P.S. 'Tis reported, but am unwilling to be-  
" lieve, that Mr. Robinson the last Lord's  
" Day from the Pulpit gave notice, That  
" whereas for many Years the three Congre-  
" gations had join'd in preparatory Work;  
" One of them ( Mr. Evans ) had now bro-  
" ken off, for which he was very sorry ;  
" ( or Words to this Purpose.)

*My Reply.*

SIR,

" **I**N Answer to yours I think I have fully  
" discharg'd my Duty, by giving you  
" in a Christian Manner the Reasons which  
" have satisfied me in Relation to my late  
" Conduct, and are such as I doubt not, when  
" known, will have more Weight with many  
" than

“ than you are pleased to admit them. I was  
 “ surpris’d and griev’d at your Reflection up-  
 “ on that learned and good Man, my Brother  
 “ *Robinson*, who deserves more Respect, and  
 “ is, I am perswaded, no farther attach’d to  
 “ me, (nor will be in a Case of this Nature  
 “ to any Man) than he is induc’d to it by his  
 “ own Conviction and Judgment. You have  
 “ nothing farther to expect from me than my  
 “ earnest Prayers to God for Mercy to us all,  
 “ and a greater Measure of Grace in this Time  
 “ of Need. I am

*Your faithful Friend and Servant in Christ,*

THO. REYNOLDS.

“ P. S. You are the first that has inform’d  
 “ me of what you mention in your Post-  
 “ script. I hope my Brother deliver’d no-  
 “ thing from the Pulpit but what he is  
 “ able to justify.

## CONCLUSION.



THUS I have gone through the whole  
 Business relating to Mr. *James*  
*Read*, contenting my self with giv-  
 ing a naked Account of Things  
 without adding many Circumstances that would  
 have aggravated Matters exceedingly, and saying  
 no more than what I thought necessary for my  
 own Vindication with as little Hurt to others

as

as I well could. I have not imitated Mr. *Browne* in his abusive way of writing, as never daring to break through the Boundaries of Religion, Truth, and good Manners, to shew a *little Wit*. If he will be profane, prostitute his Character, bely and defame a Brother Minister to make Sport, and gain Reputation among *wanton Scoffers*, I can assure him he is far from being the Object of my Envy. My Business is to *slight* his Wit, and to see what he has of *Truth* or *Argument*, which, when examined into, is but of small Account.

I intend, if God give Health and Leisure, to follow him in the other Parts of his Letter, wherein I shall shew the vile Calumnies, unfair Reasonings, notorious Uncharitableness, and scandalous Profaneness, wherewith it every where abounds: which when done, may publish it if needful, as a *Second Part* to this. At present I think fit to advertise thus much, that what he hath set forth in his *Title Page* as one great OCCASION of his Letter, ~~and~~ in which he charges me with *pelting the Non-subscribers from the Pulpit*, is so gross a Falstiy, that if he used any Endeavours to be *well* and *truly* informed, he must be *wilfully* guilty; for nothing of that Passage he refers to, was ever delivered by me in the Pulpit, or spoken in Mr. *Pomfret's* FUNERAL SERMON; but added afterwards, when I wrote the MEMOIRS of his LIFE. What I have said in the *Dedication* concerning Mr. *Denham* and the People under



der his Care, I am able to support; and as to what concerns the young *Candidates for the Ministry*, I am sorry for their Sakes, he should ever mention it. But these and other Things will be of after Consideration.

For a Close to the foregoing *Narrative*, I shall only inform my Reader that before I sent my Papers to the Press, I read to the Gentlemen of the Church the Account drawn up so far as they had any Concern therein; and they owned it to be a true one. If Mr. *Browne*, or any else, shall dispute the Matters of Fact here related, there are enow, who have professed themselves willing and ready to attest the Truth of them under their Hands.

I am sorry the Treatment I have met with, has compelled me to appear in this Manner, but I thank God, I can say, I bear no ill Will to my *Adversaries*, only wish they may see their Errors and correct them, which would be Matter of Joy to many. I never did nor do condemn any Brother as an *Arian* meerly for *Non-subscribing*. And could we be so happy as to agree in something of the like Nature with what was once offered to Consideration (but rejected with Censure) *viz.* to make a publick Declaration in a *few Articles* against those dangerous Opinions, which have of late been published and continued to be propagated with great Diligence, and resolve we will heartily stand by one another in opposing them, I am persuaded it would go a great Way in making up our lamentable Differences. But whilst  
our

our Brethren seem unwilling to subscribe the Doctrine of the ever blessed Trinity in the Words that we have done, or any other Words that may signify how they understand the Scriptures in these Points, and appear unwilling to join with us in declaring against the opposite Errors ; whilst they have, in my Opinion, very much abused our People in misrepresenting this Controversy both in its Rise and Progress, and are many of them for receiving into Communion, \* such as maintain the Son to be *different* from and *inferior* to the Father in Nature, and *flatly deny* the DIVINITY of the Holy Ghost ; whilst they hereby screen and encourage those that are against the received Doctrine, and do many Ways discourage and lessen the Usefulness of their Brethren that have subscribed it : I must pray them to forgive me if I venture to say, that this Conduct of theirs, has laid Difficulties in my Way concerning them, that hitherto I have not been able to get over. If after what I have offered they shall still make me the Bur of their Displeasure, and pursue me with *intemperate Heat*, I trust in the Grace of God through Jesus Christ, that I shall be enabled, maugre all their Attempts, to stand my Ground ; and by his Help I will say, that *till I die, I will not remove my Integrity from me.*

\* These Brethren have been publicly called upon to disown what is here declared of them in Print, but they have not yet done it. See Answer to Mr. Paine's Works. Inquisition. page 98.